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Crown Prince confers with U.S. general

AMMAN (J.T.) — Before leaving to Tehran for the Organisation of the Islamic Conference summit, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan conferred at the Royal Court with General Anthony Zinni, commander in chief of the U.S. Central Command. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that they reviewed U.S.-Jordanian relations at the economic and military levels and U.S. military assistance to Jordan. The meeting came ahead of the expected delivery of the 16 \$200 million American made F-16 jet fighters to Jordan as promised by President Clinton's administration following Jordan's conclusion of a peace treaty with Israel. Officials said that the jet fighters were expected in Jordan on Dec. 17 and that U.S. Secretary of Defence William Cohen was expected to attend a welcoming ceremony.

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Netanyahu ready to withdraw from 10 per cent of W. Bank — Israel TV

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is ready to bow to U.S. pressure and hand over at least 10 per cent of the West Bank to the Palestinians under his troop withdrawal plan, Israeli public television reported on Monday. Until now, Israeli press reports have said Mr. Netanyahu would limit the size of the pullout from rural areas of the West Bank to between six and eight per cent. The television said Mr. Netanyahu was ready to raise the size of the withdrawal following pressure from U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright during their meetings in Paris at the weekend. However, Mr. Netanyahu's spokesman Shai Bazak denied that the scope of the withdrawal had been fixed.

Hebron students mark Intifada anniversary

HEBRON (AFP) — Palestinian students marked the 10th anniversary of the Intifada here Monday with calls for jihad, or holy war, against Israeli occupation. Around 1,000 students gathered on the university campus to celebrate the uprising against Israeli rule which broke out in the Gaza Strip in 1987 and continued until 1994. The students carried placards calling for holy war and shouted slogans supporting Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, which violently opposes the 1993 peace accords with Israel. The walls of university buildings were decked with the green flag of Hamas and pictures of its spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, recently released from an Israeli jail.

Israeli army shell falls on Golan settlement

AVIAM (AFP) — An artillery shell fired by the Israeli army landed Monday in this Jewish settlement on the Golan Heights, military sources said. A young woman was treated for shock but no other injuries or damage were reported, the sources said. The shell was apparently fired during a training exercise on the Golan, which Israel captured from Syria in 1967. About 15,000 Israelis live in settlements on the strategic plateau. The military sources said an investigation had been opened into the incident.

Qatar wants to host next OIC summit

DOHA (AFP) — Qatar wants to host the next summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in three years time, a government spokesman said here Monday. "Qatar has expressed its readiness to hold the next summit," Fawaz Ben Ahmad Al Attiya told reporters on the eve of the OIC summit in Tehran. Doha hosted a Middle East economic conference last month but it was boycotted by most Arab states. They stayed away in protest at the participation of Israel, which they blame for the deadlock in the peace process.

Qatar says ties with Egypt back to normal

DOHA (R) — Qatar said on Monday its tense relations with Egypt were back to normal after reconciliation talks between the emir and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. "Reconciliation has been reached and the relations are now back to normal with Egypt," foreign ministry spokesman Fawaz Al Attiyah told reporters. Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani held a reconciliation meeting with President Mubarak in Saudi Arabia last week after Saudi mediation to end tension between the two states. Relations between Qatar and Egypt have been tense over Qatari accusations that Egypt was behind a coup attempt to oust Qatar's ruler. Egypt has denied that. Relations worsened in October after Cairo boycotted the Middle East and North Africa economic conference in Doha attended by Israel to protest the lack of progress in Middle East peace moves.

Crown Prince expected to press for zakat fund in address to OIC today

Tarawneh clarifies Kingdom's position on Jerusalem

From Abdullah Hasanat in Tehran

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan arrived here last night at the head of a high level delegation to represent Jordan at the 8th Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit that opens today. Heads of states and delegations from 54 countries started arriving yesterday after the foreign ministers of the member states worked out an ambitious agenda that includes all issues concerning the Muslim World and intends to address all conflicts between member states.

At the top of the summit's agenda are the Middle East peace process, U.N. sanctions against Iraq and Libya and terrorism. In all there are 141 resolutions to be

submitted before the delegations.

Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh, who represented Jordan at the foreign ministers' meeting earlier this week sought to dispel doubts over Jordan's policy on Jerusalem.

Dr. Tarawneh said that he expressed his reservations over a draft resolution that ignores the Kingdom's special role in Jerusalem.

"Over the past 50 years Jordan tended for the holy places in east Jerusalem and prevented Israel from Judaizing the city," Dr. Tarawneh said.

Prince Hassan is scheduled to address the summit today stressing the role that the Muslim nations ought to play in a changing world and the importance of the Muslim umma taking moderate stands towards global

issues, officials said.

Prince Hassan is also expected to press for a zakat (alms) fund to assist in alleviating the sufferings of the Muslim poor and would contribute to health and education.

During the 3-day conference the Crown Prince, who last night met Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, is expected to hold talks with Iranian leaders and Muslim heads of delegations.

"Jordanian-Iranian ties are improving steadily," one Jordanian official observed. The official said that the warm treatment that the Jordanian delegation, especially the Crown Prince, received in Tehran is a strong indication that Iran, under President

Mohammad Khatami, is keen on improving ties with the Kingdom.

Dr. Musa also expressed similar sentiment.

The Egyptian foreign minister, whose country's relations with Iran were strained over the past five years because it accuses Tehran of supporting terrorism, was quoted by the Iranian news agency (IRNA) as saying that "the summit will have positive effects on Arab-Iranian relations."

The Arab states hope that the summit resolutions and Iran's presidency of the OIC in the coming three years will help moderate Tehran's position on the peace process and its

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein speaks on Monday at the ceremony held in honour of all the people who participated in the renovation and running of the Hashemite Palace which was converted to Dar Al Bir, a home for Jordan's orphans. Her Majesty Queen Noor and Her Royal Highness Princess Zein attended the ceremony (Photo by Youssef 'Allan)

King honours all who made Dar Al Bir project successful

'I hope this achievement will mark a torch lighting way for similar work in different parts of country'

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday honoured officials, nannies and employees who took part in the care of the orphaned children at Dar Al Bir and participated in renovating the Hashemite Palace which was converted into an orphans' home.

In a speech at a ceremony dedicated to honouring these officials, the King said that he was grateful to all those who helped to

make the projects successful.

"We are at the start of the road and I hope this achievement will mark a starting point and a torch lighting the way for similar work in different parts of the country so that we can serve the coming generations," said the King.

"We still have a long way to go and a great work to do in different fields. This serves as a start and I am aware of the great work

which was carried out by all concerned including the Royal Medical Services, the Jordanian Armed Forces and the workers at Dar Al Bir and others," the King added.

"Nothing can match the smiles on the faces of the orphaned children who are all dear to us when we visited them a few days ago, and we thank God they are all in good health and in

(Continued on page 7)

King confers Al Kawkab Medal on Saudi prince

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein received at his residence Babal Salam, Monday, Saudi Arabian Prince Al Waleed Ben Talal Ben Abdul Aziz and his son Prince Khaled Bin Al Waleed.

After a review of economic issues, the King conferred on Prince Al Waleed the Jordanian Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order in recognition of his pioneering role in economic affairs in general and his contributions to Jordanian economic investments in particular.

Speaking to Jordan Television after meeting the King, Prince Al Waleed voiced appreciation of the Royal honour conferred upon him.

Referring to his investments in Jordan, the prince said he is investing in banks, the media and tourism sectors, adding that he has investments in the Philadelphia Bank and City Bank in Jordan.

He said he was investing in the Four Seasons Hotel which is being built now, adding that he intends to invest in another hotel which is to be built on the east coast of the Dead Sea

and another in Petra.

Prince Al Waleed said the investment climate in Jordan is very encouraging adding that, "I as a representative of the private sector in Saudi Arabia encourage the private sector businessmen to invest in the Kingdom which has provided the necessary facilities for such investments."

Prince Al Waleed added that he was currently looking for areas to invest in the agricultural sector, adding that he is keen to invest in Jordan which he considers his second homeland.

Shiite Iran welcomes Muslim leaders for historic summit

TEHRAN (AFP) — Muslim leaders descended on Tehran Monday for a summit Iran hopes will signal its return to the global stage, 18 years after its revolution earned the country pariah status.

Shiite Iran has pulled out the stops to ensure a high turnout for the Tuesday to Thursday summit and seal its reconciliation with a wary and predominantly Sunni Muslim world.

The Islamic Republic is also openly hailing the arrival of so many world leaders on its soil as a snub to the United States, which has accused Iran of sponsoring terrorism and pushed its total isolation.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami stationed himself at Mehrabad airport along with Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi and Vice President Hassan Habibi to meet and greet the guests as their jets touched down every 15 minutes.

Red carpets stretched across the airport's tarmac to allow the Iranian leaders to escort guests to waiting limousines after brief ceremonies with national anthems.

Many Middle Eastern leaders are making their first visit to Iran since the 1979 revolution, encouraged by an intensive Iranian charm offensive to smooth over hostility to the coun-

try's brand of Shia Islam.

Tehran is pushing a theme of cooperation and solidarity, urging a strong and influential Muslim bloc to start punching its weight on the international stage.

"Dignity, dialogue and participation" are the buzzwords for the meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and walls in Tehran are plastered with the slogan.

Among the former foes who arrived Monday were Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Sabah and Iraq's Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan.

Crown Prince Hassan and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz also

arrived Monday.

Until recently, Iran had tense relations with most Gulf Arab states, notably Saudi Arabia, because of fears that Tehran was trying to export its revolution to the conservative emirates.

President Arafat last visited here 18 years ago, six days after the shah was deposed, but initial warm ties disintegrated when the PLO took Iraq's side in its bitter eight-year war against Iran.

Iran is also vehemently opposed to the Arab-Israeli peace process, and has branded President Arafat a "traitor" for signing interim peace accords with Israel.

(Continued on page 7)

Half of world's refugees come from Islamic countries — U.N.

CAIRO (AP) — A U.N. official said Monday that more than half of the world's refugees are from Islamic countries and urged Muslims to contribute more to alleviate their hardship.

Mohammad Boukry, chief representative of the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Middle East, said wealthy Muslims could pay their annual "Zakat" to help humanitarian programmes.

Zakat is the 2.5 per cent

of earnings that devout Muslims set aside each year for charitable donations.

Mr. Boukry said that some Muslims — especially in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates — already were earmarking some of their zakat contributions for UNHCR refugee programmes. He urged that this movement be widened.

The NRF groups Islamists and their life-long ideological opponents: pan-Arabists, leftists, liberals and independents who boycotted the elections and are seeking greater political and democratic reforms.

The recent crisis between the government and the

Islamists over a perceived crackdown on public freedoms, has tipped the balance in favour of hard-liners, according to Ibrahim Gharsibeh, a specialist on Islamist politics.

"Extremism on one side calls for extremism on the other," he told the Jordan Times. "And the predominance of the hawks at this stage is a natural reaction to government policies."

The boycott decision also ruffled feathers inside the Muslim Brotherhood, causing the expulsion of two of its members for defying its stand and running in the ballot, and the dismissal of a third for criticising the movement's policy.

(Continued on page 7)

With hardliners expected to take over IAF, party's relations with regime may face increased tensions

By Francesca Ciriaci Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Hard-liners appear set to win their first-ever majority in the Islamic Action Front (IAF) Shura Council in upcoming elections, signalling increased tension with the government, analysts said Monday.

The IAF, the political arm of the influential Muslim Brotherhood movement, has been beset by internal feuds and personal rivalries since its decision to boycott the last parliamentary elections in protest against government policies.

The likely victory of extremists could open an era of heightened tension in the movement's already

troubled ties with the government after the Islamist-led boycott of the ballot, the first since Jordan signed peace with Israel in 1994, analysts added.

Sources have predicted "hawks" will win at least 40 per cent of the 120-seat Shura Council, now dominated by "doves," in the Dec. 18-19 elections.

"It looks likely that 25

NEWS ANALYSIS

per cent of the other seats will go to moderates while centrists will take the rest," one analyst told the Jordan Times.

The Shura Council is the highest decision-making body of the IAF, established in 1992 after Jordan

legalised political parties. Unease in Islamists' ties with their boycott allies in an eight-party coalition — the National Reform Forces (NRF) — could also increase if hard-liners sit in the helm, sources said.

"Once in power, the hawks could reject cooperation with both the government and the newly-created NRF," said one well-placed Islamist analyst.

The NRF groups Islamists and their life-long ideological opponents: pan-Arabists, leftists, liberals and independents who boycotted the elections and are seeking greater political and democratic reforms.

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Islamists over a perceived crackdown on public freedoms, has tipped the balance in favour of hard-liners, according to Ibrahim Gharsibeh, a specialist on Islamist politics.

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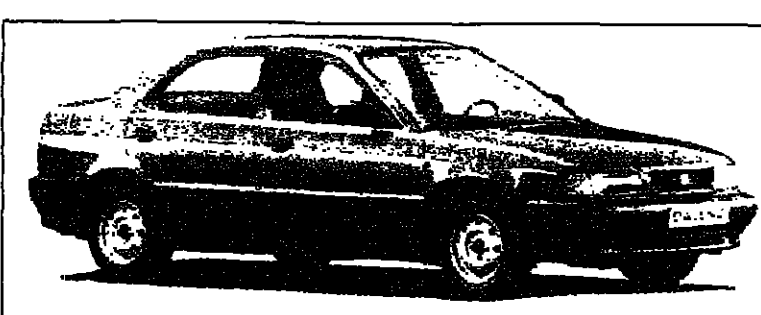
(Continued on page 7)

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37 rebel Turkish Kurds killed in clashes in northern Iraq, Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish troops and their Iraqi Kurdish allies have killed 37 separatist Turkish Kurds in ongoing clashes in northern Iraq and on Turkish soil, officials said Monday.

Fighters from Ankara's ally, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), killed 30 members of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in fighting in Pîrbela near the Iranian border in northern Iraq, the state-run Anatolia News Agency said, quoting military sources.

Turkish army troops killed seven PKK rebels in other clashes in Bitlis and Mardin provinces in Turkey's south-east bordering northern Iraq, the southeast's regional governorship said.

The officials made no mention of Turkish and Iraqi Kurd losses.

In a related development, Turkey's top military commander said the nearly 20,000 Turkish troops and 8,000 KDP fighters were successfully hitting PKK targets in the army campaign launched in northern Iraq on Friday.

"Our operations are continuing with great success," Chief of the General Staff General Ismail Hakkî Karadayî told reporters in Ankara.

Also Turkish F-16 and F-4 warplanes pounded PKK positions inside northern Iraq on the fourth straight day of the latest Turkish military campaign in the area, sources in southeastern Turkey said.

The ground and air offensive, the third such large-scale military operation since May, was launched in a bid to wipe out PKK bases concentrated in the Khazur region near the Iranian border.

Turkish armoured battalions pushed along the Khazur frontier, wedged between Turkey and Iraq, at the weekend after infiltrating Iraqi territory from southeastern Turkey, Anatolia said Sunday.

But the pro-PKK television channel Med-TV, broadcasting from western Europe via satellite, said the Turkish troops were facing tough resistance by the PKK and had failed to make significant gains. Countering criticism by some Islamic countries during a meeting of Muslim states in Tehran on Sunday, a senior

Turkish official defended the latest military campaign in northern Iraq.

"Terrorists use bases in northern Iraq to conduct operations against Turkey. As long as there is a vacuum of power in the region, our clean-up operations are inevitable," said Abad Andican, state minister responsible for relations with Islamic countries.

More than 30,000 Turkish troops poured into northern Iraq in May for a joint operation with the KDP against the separatist Turkish Kurds. They withdrew in June.

But another incursion followed in September and most of the troops entering then have remained in northern Iraq until the latest campaign announced Friday.



Hashemi Rafsanjani, the former Iranian president and top adviser to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, greets Palestinian President Yasser Arafat at his house on Monday in Tehran. Mr. Arafat is attending the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Tehran which will start today (AFP photo)

Scuffles as Arafat arrives in Tehran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat arrived here Monday to attend an Islamic summit on his first visit to the Islamic Republic for 18 years.

Mr. Arafat was met by Iranian President Mohammad Khatami after his jet touched down at Tehran's Mehrabad airport, but shortly afterwards the Palestinian leader's bodyguards scuffled with Iranian security.

Witnesses said Mr.

Arafat's guards tried to get into the Palestinian leader's official car to escort him to his residence, but they were physically restrained by elite Revolutionary Guards.

The two sides traded punches briefly as President Arafat was whisked away in a Peugeot stretch limousine to his official residence.

Iran has vehemently opposed the Arab-Israeli peace process since it was launched at the 1991 Madrid peace conference,

and has in the past branded Mr. Arafat a "traitor" for signing interim peace accords with Israel.

However, a reconciliation between the two sides was sealed when President Arafat met former Iranian President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani at the extraordinary Islamic summit in Islamabad in March this year.

Mr. Arafat was a keen supporter of the Islamist opposition to the Shah of Iran, and visited the country just six days after the

monarch was deposed by the 1979 revolution and was received by spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

However relations deteriorated rapidly, mainly because of the PLO's support for Iraq during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War.

Despite the fall-out, the PLO has kept a diplomatic representative in Tehran, an office formally inaugurated by President Arafat at the former Israeli embassy.

Turkey, Israel to boost ties

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey and Israel on Monday pledged to deepen their strategic cooperation despite strong criticism raised at a meeting of Islamic countries in Iran.

"Our relationship is a strategic one," Israel's visiting defence minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, told reporters at a meeting here with his Turkish counterpart, Ismet Sezgin.

"We are happy with the pace of development in our relations and we will do everything we can to boost those ties in political, military and industrial fields," he said.

Mr. Sezgin dismissed a resolution adopted in Tehran Sunday by ministers representing 55 members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) condemning Muslim states with military ties with Israel.

"That text is not binding for us," Mr. Sezgin said.

But both defence ministers said Turkish-Israeli cooperation was not aimed against the interests of any third parties. "Turkey and Israel want to be the guarantee of peace and stability in the region," Mr. Sezgin said, adding: "Our military cooperation is mainly based on training."

"Our cooperation will only strengthen peace, and will not be directed against anyone else," Mr. Mordechai said.

In Tehran the OIC's final draft expressed "deep concern about the fact that some member states... are establishing military cooperation with Israel."

The ministers rejected a Syrian demand that Turkey be named explicitly in the resolution, but Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa said the resolutions clearly targeted Turkey.

Iran favours 'fresh steps' to settle dispute with UAE

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Monday called for "fresh steps" to settle a territorial dispute with the United Arab Emirates, as UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Rashid Abdullah arrived here to attend an Islamic summit.

"Iran has always shown its desire for expanding political relations with the UAE and we feel the UAE officials are also interested," Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi told reporters after Sheikh Abdullah's arrival.

"We hope that through

direct dialogue we will take major steps towards boosting ties," Mr. Kharazi added, quoted by the official Iranian news agency IRNA.

"With the new atmosphere created in Iran after the presidential elections, Iran and the UAE should take fresh steps to bring their views closer to each other," he added. UAE foreign ministry official Mohammad Khalifa Al Suyeh attended last week's meeting of foreign ministers from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC)

ahead of the Dec. 9-11 summit.

Iran has made a concerted effort to woo UAE leaders ahead of the summit, sending Mr. Kharazi and Defence Minister Admiral Ali Shamkhani on separate visits to the emirate last month.

Iran and the UAE are in conflict over the sovereignty of three islands in the Persian Gulf — Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa — all of which have been occupied by Iran since 1971 but claimed by the UAE.

Jordan Communist Party to hold conference Dec. 17

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordanian Communist Party (JCP) has invited 30 delegations from other similar parties worldwide to attend their second conference in Amman in 20 years, set to open later this month.

The party, which operated underground after Jordan imposed a ban on political groups in 1957, gained permission to

operate in 1992 after the Kingdom reversed its decision.

Yaqoub Zayyadin, JCP secretary general of the JCP, said on Monday the group had obtained official permission to host the meeting on Dec. 17. Their first public convention was held in 1993.

Dr. Zayyadin, who has been party leader since 1989, said he will not seek re-election for "health reasons."

The JCP, established in

1928, is one of the oldest Marxist parties in the Arab World and many of its leaders in Jordan have spent years in jail during the fifties and sixties when the group operated underground.

Dr. Zayyadin ran as an independent in the 1989 elections, the first since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, but failed to win a seat in the 80-member Lower House. But Issa Midanat, who broke away from the JCP in 1988 and

set up his own party, won a seat in that ballot.

JCP candidates also failed to win a seat in the 1997 elections.

Party officials said 1,500 delegates representing communist parties in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, the United States, Canada, Russia, France, Greece, Cyprus, and other countries will attend.

The Amman meeting will not change the party's Marxist-Leninist

platform but will discuss a new programme to help enhance the country's democracy and resist normalisation of ties with Israel, their avowed enemy, JCP officials said.

The JCP has been trying hard to block the 1994 peace treaty Jordan signed with Israel.

It will also elect a new secretary general, politburo and members for its Central Committee.

Israeli belly dancer sues Bassiouny

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli belly dancer filed a \$290,000 suit Monday against Egypt's long-serving ambassador for attempted rape in a case that has threatened to damage relations between the two countries.

The suit filed in a Tel Aviv court accuses Ambassador Muhammad Bassiouny of luring the woman to an Israeli doctor's apartment and assaulting her, the dancer's lawyer Nitzan Darshan-Leitner told AFP.

Israeli police dropped charges lodged by the dancer against Mr. Bassiouny in August and the foreign ministry said it had "full confidence" in the ambassador, in a bid to limit damage to ties between the two countries, which signed a peace treaty in 1979.

Mr. Bassiouny, who has served in Israel since 1986, has in turn accused the woman of trying to blackmail him, but has not lodged a complaint with police. He has threatened to leave his post if she filed a law suit.

The dancer, whose identity was concealed by the court, accused Mr. Bassiouny and plastic surgeon Yehoshafat Shulman of luring her to Shulman's apartment on several occasions, the last to let Bassiouny rape her. Mr. Darshan-Leitner said.

"She had agreed twice out of respect for the ambassador. On the third time, she refused until the ambassador called himself to her to come and she agreed," Ms. Darshan-Leitner said, adding that the two have known each other for six years from several events where she has performed.

Shulman was not in the apartment when she arrived and Mr. Bassiouny was cordial, offering her a birthday present as they sat in the living room, the lawyer added.

Mr. Bassiouny suggested moving into the bedroom and the dancer refused but then relented, trusting the ambassador out of respect and the knowledge any act against her would damage his career, Ms. Darshan-Leitner said.

"But then he took her hand and began telling her that he wanted her and loved her very much," Ms. Darshan-Leitner said.

He attempted to rape her but she eventually threw him off her and fled the apartment, the lawyer added.

Islamists want 12 Egyptian leaders tried for 'genocide'

CAIRO (AFP) — Islamists want 12 Egyptian leaders, including President Hosni Mubarak, tried for "genocide, high treason and plundering the nation's treasures," according to a statement received by a Western news agency here Monday.

The statement, which purports to come from Egypt's second largest Islamist activist group, Jihad, parodies a press release issued by the Egyptian information min-

istry last week.

The Egyptian government statement called for the extradition from Europe and Afghanistan of 14 alleged leaders of Jihad and the larger Jamaa Islamiyya who it said were guilty of "crimes against humanity."

The Jihad statement called for President Mubarak, Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri, Interior Minister Habib Al Adli, former interior minister, Hassan Al Aifi and other

senior officials to be handed over "for Islamic judgement."

It included mock wanted posters for each official. That for President Mubarak said he had been "sentenced to death for high treason [dealing with the Israeli enemy], sentenced to death in the case of genocide of thousands of Egyptian people" and "incriminated in the killing of hundreds of thousands of citizens in Iraq in 1991" when Egyptian troops took

part on the allied side in the Gulf war against Iraq.

It joked that as well as being "head of an Egyptian regime," he "works as U.S. ambassador in Egypt in the afternoon."

The Jihad group was responsible for the assassination of then Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

It was decimated by arrests in the 1980s, but reformed in the early 1990s as Talayeh Al Fatah (vanguards of conquest),

the name by which it is now more often known.

Like the larger Jamaa Islamiyya, the Jihad has been the focus of a wave of arrests since the massacre of 58 foreign holidaymakers in Luxor on Nov. 17.

Egypt has since been putting considerable pressure on Britain and Switzerland, both of whom lost nationals in the massacre, to hand over fugitive Islamists convicted in absentia by Egyptian military courts.

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 Sandokan
14:30 C.R.O.
15:00 Skippy
15:30 The Album Show
16:30 Square One T.V.
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 You Bet Your Life
20:00 Doc. — Skeleton Coast
20:30 Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 News in English
22:30 Margaret Volant
23:15 Drama — Scarlet and Black

PRAYER TIMES

04:57 Fajr
06:19 (Sunrise) Duha
11:28 Dhuhur
14:13 'Asr
16:37 Maghreb
17:59 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefeh. Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 632785.

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St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel.
616757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel.
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Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Rainfall is expected in most

parts of the Kingdom and winds
will drop significantly with skies
cloudy to partly cloudy. In
Aqaba, there will be a chance of
scattered showers, skies partly
cloudy, winds southerly active,
and seas rough.

Amman 09/14

Aqaba 14/22

Deserts 05/17

Jordan Valley 11/20

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 19, Aqaba 26 Humidity

readings: Amman 50 per

cent, Aqaba 92 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 885446
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab 602507
Dr. Ayman Al Mubtaseb 875748
Dr. Jamal Jbara 847351
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Ya'qub Al Khatib 991772

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Dept. 661111

Civil Defence Emergency 630341

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680101

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 0853200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity 644281/6

Akleh Maternity 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Mahas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Mousher Hospital 067227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/7

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 012240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 365199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900561

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Rasma Hospital 021275555

Greek Catholic Hospital 02127275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital 021247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15 Sanaa (RJ)

07:25 Damascus (RJ)

09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

10:05 Beirut (RJ)

10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

16:20 Cairo (RJ)

17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:30 London, Frankfurt (RJ)

02:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

14:35 Istanbul (TK)

14:40 Munich (YP)

16:30 Rome (AZ)

18:30 Dubai, Damascus (EK)

20:00 Tel Aviv (LY)

Queen launches national coalition for children's rights, well-being

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Monday officially launched the National Coalition for Children (NCC), which was established by the National Task Force for Children (NTFC) as a grassroots forum to facilitate, initiate, sustain, and accelerate the development of programmes and activities that will enhance children's rights and well-being, according to a press release.

The NCC is a result of numerous meetings over the past year of national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), institutions, and individuals involved with children. The Queen, who is the chairperson of the NTFC, emphasised the importance of the NCC, which will bring together 162 representatives of Jordanian governmental and non-governmental organisations, international agencies, specialists and individuals

working for the well-being of children.

The Queen added that the NTFC will collaborate and coordinate with existing institutions working in the fields of child welfare through the coalition, whose membership will be voluntary and will involve registering with the NTFC. The latter comprises a commission to help the NCC develop national policies for children and a secretariat, which has two technical departments: the Research and Data Base Centre and the Information, Education, and Communication Unit to assist in formulating the NCC's strategies, the statement continued.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani announced that the prime minister officially declared the NTFC on the national reference for children and issues pertaining to

their well-being.

NTFC Coordinator Hayat Yaghi said the Task Force, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, other ministries, NGOs, and specialists, has finalised the revisions and development of a comprehensive draft Child Act that will be submitted to the new Parliament by the end of this year. She added that the NTFC has completed its study on child labour in Jordan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and the International Labour Organisation, and is currently working on Jordan's 1998 national report for the U.N. Committee on the "International Convention on the Rights of the Child," the announcement continued.

Jordan has witnessed significant progress in child development. It joined UNICEF's "Child Survival Revolution" in 1980, achieving Universal Child Immunisation (90 per cent immunisation against the six killer diseases) in 1987, three years before the targeted date of 1990. The Kingdom ratified the Arab and International Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1985 and 1991 respectively and launched the National Plan of Action for Children (1993-2000), which encompasses the fields of health, education, environment and development, the announcement said.

Earlier, Queen Noor participated in a working session of the NCC, which included presentations on the status of Jordanian children, legislation pertaining to children and their rights, and the coordination of organisations working in the field of child welfare, in addition to laying the general framework for the NCC.

The event was attended by HRH Princess Alia, several ministers, and officials.



HRH Princess Basma Monday discusses the agenda of the Jordanian National Committee for Women during its first meeting (Petra photo)

Princess Basma chairs first meeting of national women's committee

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Monday chaired the first meeting of the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) after the Cabinet approved its new membership on Nov. 15, according to a press release.

Princess Basma welcomed the members of the JNCW and wished them success in their work, especially at this time, considered to be the beginning of a new era in which Jordanian women's priorities and ambitions should be realised, particularly in reaching decision-making positions in all areas, the statement continued.

Amal Sabbagh, the secretary general of JNCW, presented the strategic directions of the future work of JNCW's secretariat and the mecha-

nisms of work to be adopted. As a policy platform, JNCW will streamline its work into three major programmes: policy analysis and advice, support of practical measures in the application of legislation, and information and liaison, according to the statement.

The policy analysis and advice programme will concentrate on the identification and critical evaluation of legislation and policies as they affect women and the provision of recommendations on amendments to legislation and any other policy proposals that have significance for women's political, social, and economic participation, the press release read.

This will be done through JNCW's Legal Committee in conjunction with concerned indi-

viduals from civil society and the public sector.

The programme on the support of practical measures in the application of legislation will monitor the effect of legislation on women's status as employees in the public and private sectors as well as the effect of legislation on women's lives in other areas.

In implementing those programmes, the JNCW will rely on the full participation of civil society entities and the public sector, according to the announcement.

The committee also discussed extensively the situation of women in the last parliamentary elections and the need to develop plans in this regard to enable women to reach decision-making positions, the press release concluded.

Agricultural seminar focuses on financing for small farmers

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates representing 18 Arab states including Jordan Monday embarked on discussions of working papers covering means of providing funds to small farmers in the Arab World as part of boosting agricultural production and ensuring Arab food security.

Working papers discussed at Monday's session came from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Oman, Algeria, Palestine, Qatar, and Yemen. Participants also reviewed a report by the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development.

At the opening session Sunday of this seminar on financing small farmers' projects, Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha said agriculture is one of the most important sectors in Jordan, accounting for 15 per cent of the country's total exports, and the government is determined to continue providing credit to farmers through the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) to enable them to increase output.

The minister said the agricultural sector accounts for more than 28 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

The ministry's agricultural policies, recently approved by the Council of Ministers, will be carried out in line with the Kingdom's economic restructuring programme, which is designed to help Jordan become self-sufficient and ensure food security, according to Mr. Khreisha.

These policies are designed to further improve the quality of products, boost exports, and contribute to an integrated inter-Arab trade network, he said.

Referring to the financing of agricultural projects, the minister stated that the ACC, which was established in 1959, has to date given 133,000 local farmers JD218 million in soft loans, 80 per cent of which went to small farmers.

Yahya Bakour, director general of the Arab Organisation for Administrative Development, said the Arab region has a vast agricultural potential, among others, and added that the organisation is continuing to help small farmers employ modern technology to increase output.

During this pan-Arab seminar, officials and experts concerned with agricultural production will present their experiences in the field of providing credit to small farmers.

JMA collecting applications from doctors willing to work in Malaysia

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Medical Association (JMA) is in the process of collecting applications from Jordanian physicians and specialists willing to work in Malaysia, which has expressed its desire to employ them, according to JMA President Basem Dajani.

In a press statement published Monday, he said the JMA last week received a message from the

Malaysian health authorities requesting a list of doctors wishing to work in its hospitals.

Dr. Dajani said the JMA was maintaining contacts with various countries to help unemployed doctors find jobs.

Meanwhile, Dr. Dajani Monday said the issues between the government and the public sector health professionals who staged work stoppages in the past few weeks to back

demands for more pay and better working conditions have not yet been resolved.

Dr. Dajani, who serves as the spokesperson for the doctors, dentists, and pharmacists employed by government hospitals, said a mediation committee set up to find a solution to the problem will hold a meeting with Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi to discuss the issue.

Dr. Kurdi told the Jordan

Times and Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday that the Ministry of Health has now appointed a special committee, chaired by Adnan Abbas, the ministry's secretary general, to work out regulations concerning incentives to be offered to the doctors.

Some of the health workers' demands included an incentives plan for the doctors and increasing allowances from 90 per cent to 120 per cent.

Possible visit by Pope in 2000 jeopardised by peace process deadlock — patriarch

By Lima Nabil
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Roman Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem Michel Sabbah has said a visit to the holy lands in Palestine by His Holiness Pope John Paul II marking the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ depends on progress toward achieving peace in the Middle East.

Palestinian religious and social committees have begun preparations for Christmas but these plans are overshadowed by the present political situation and the continued Palestinian people's suffering due to the siege and continued occupation of their lands, the patriarch said in an interview Sunday with the Jordan Times.

"Would it be logical for the Pope to come to Jerusalem, with the Palestinians living in the towns and cities around unable

to converge on the city to hold prayers with him?" asked the patriarch.

"The Pope has visualised a plan to make the pilgrimage to the holy places, starting near Basra in Iraq so as to follow in the footsteps of Abraham, but all depends on the improvement of the general situation in the region," according to Patriarch Sabbah.

"We have created a special committee of Catholic bishops who are connected with the central authority in Rome and we have formed an ecumenical committee representing the various churches and denominations to hold contacts with other world organisations in the course of preparing for the Pope's visit and the celebrations of Christ's birthday in 2000," according to the patriarch, who said the two committees are coordinating their

plans with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) for the religious celebrations.

"It is the right of the Pope to make the pilgrimage to the holy places and it is hoped that peace will prevail so as to create the opportune climate for the visit," he added.

In reply to a question about the recent reports in the Israeli press claiming that the PNA has been persecuting Christians, the patriarch said: "The general political situation is unstable and some individual, isolated incidents occur sometimes, but not by the PNA, with which the church maintains excellent relations. Therefore, all the reports in the Israeli press are groundless."

"Christians and Muslims together, living in harmony, form the Palestinian nation, and whenever there is a problem, we deal with it ourselves through dialogue."

In response to a question about damage to church property in Palestine, he said some property belonging to Christians has been seized as part of the ongoing Israeli confiscation of both Muslim and Christian property, which is being done under the pretext of opening roads.

Referring to the recent Vatican-Israeli agreement on the legal status of the church's estates, he said it was not a new political agreement and has nothing to do with the political status of the city of Jerusalem.

"The Vatican strongly believes that Jerusalem belongs to the three monotheistic religions and that they have equal rights in it," the patriarch stressed.

Court sentences 52-year-old to death for wife's murder; Masri files appeal

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court has sentenced a 52-year-old man to death for killing his wife, whose body was found buried in a cave eight years after the murder.

The court, which adjourned in Irbid last week, sentenced Ahmad A. to death after he was found guilty of the premeditated murder of his wife Amneh Hassan, 40, in Tabaket Fahel area in the northern part of the Kingdom.

According to court documents, the defendant, who was arrested by police in August after a man discovered Ms. Hassan's remains in the cave, claimed that he killed her for reasons of honour.

Ahmad told interrogators that he plotted to kill his wife after seeing a

man leave his house late at night in 1989 upon returning home from a party.

"Ahmad claimed that his wife, the mother of nine, denied having relations with anyone, but he did not believe her and plotted to kill her," court transcripts said.

On the evening of the murder, the defendant lured his wife to a desert cave, claiming that there was gold buried in the cave. The defendant then drew a gun he had purchased and shot his wife twice in the head and back and buried her in the cave, according to the documents.

The following morning, the court maintained, he asked his children about his wife's whereabouts, then went and placed a person missing ad in the newspapers. Two months later, the defendant mar-

ried another woman, the court added.

Criminal Prosecutor Zubair Atiyah who was handling the case, had asked the court for the maximum penalty.

The verdict, which was handed down by Judges Abdul Hamid Sa'ad, Ahmad Khatib, and Yassin Abdullat, will be reviewed by a higher court within 30 days.

Meanwhile, the attorney defending Mazen Masri, who last month was convicted and sentenced to life by the Criminal Court for murdering his two children in September 1996, Sunday appealed the ruling at the State Security Court.

Attorney Ahmad Najdawi, in his 21-page argument, contested the court's ruling and demanded the acquittal of his client.

On Nov. 30, the Crimi-

nal Court convicted Mr. Masri of poisoning his two children Hanin, nine, and Hani, six, with cyanide on Sept. 11, and sentenced him to death, a sentence that was commuted to life because his father dropped the charges against him.

Mr. Masri, who confessed to the murder on Sept. 25, also reportedly told authorities that he had previously attempted to murder his wife and two children in August 1996 by opening a gas cylinder while the three slept in the couple's bedroom.

Mr. Masri cited jealousy as the motive for the murder, because his children were more attached to their mother than to him.

Family of brothers murdered in U.S. say they will not seek trial here

By Munther Murjan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The family of two Jordanian men murdered in the U.S. last month have said they have full confidence in the American legal system and would not press for the trial of two alleged suspects in Jordan.

They were commenting on weekend reports from Cincinnati, Ohio, that a Jordanian immigrant and the man she allegedly paid to kill her husband were arrested Friday in connection with the deaths of her husband and his brother, a retired army commander.

Linda Khreis, 37, was charged with conspiracy to aggravated murder in the shooting death on

Nov. 22 of her husband Maher Khreis, a 38-year-old Jordanian who owned the grocery where he died.

His brother Ziad, 49, also a Jordanian, was gunned down at the same time as the two men left the store about 1:30 a.m. Detectives said the brother was killed because he happened to be with the primary target of the alleged murder plot.

"We believe that Linda is involved because the American system is a serious one," retired army officer Zuhair Khreis, the eldest brother of the two victims, told the Jordan Times Sunday.

"Since the crime took place in the U.S. and the authorities there are fully informed and have all the details, we do not see a

need for a trial to be held in Jordan," added the bereaved brother. "We want the U.S. legal system to deal with her and to give her what she deserves."

Police arrested Andre Miles, 24, as the alleged hired gunman early Friday and charged him with two accounts of aggravated murder.

They arrested Mrs. Khreis at police headquarters after requesting she come there to discuss the case. She had returned earlier in the week from Jordan where funerals were held for the two brothers.

A third man, Emad Fawzi Issa, 28, was charged with conspiracy to aggravated murder. He was identified by police as the alleged intermediary in bringing Mr. Miles

and Mrs. Khreis together.

Cincinnati Police Commander Ted Schoch declined to discuss a motive or how much money was involved in the alleged conspiracy. But a Jordanian friend of the family told a Cincinnati television station that the woman was jealous of a second wife of Mr. Khreis who lives in Jordan.

"We were not aware of any marital problems between them. They used to travel together and Linda was aware of his other wife and there were contacts between them. She was clear on that," Zuhair Khreis added.

He said the Jordanian embassy in Washington was not providing them with any information. "All what we come across is from the local papers."

WHAT'S GOING ON

PLAY

* "The Moment" (Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (until Dec. 11).

FILM

* "Mr. Bean (The Perils of Pursuits of Mr. Bean)" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Plastic (abstract) art by Iraqi artist Dhia Khaza'i at Hamourabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Dec. 18

* Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 10.

* Paintings by Ammar Khammash at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 12.

* An exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Koraisi, and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Massoudi, inspired by the poems of Mahmoud Darwish, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz, and works by contemporary Arab artists.

* Works by Khalid Khreis at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 10.

* "Journey Within" by Pakistani artist Gulgee and his son, sculptor Amin Gulgee, at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Tel. 630128), until Dec. 15.

Rotary Club elects new board

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Rotary Cosmopolitan Club has elected a new board to begin serving as of July 1998, at which time the present board's mandate ends.

The new board includes Janette Ghazi Rakan as president, Ibrahim Sherbain as vice president, Nasri Rabadi as secretary, Ghassan Halasah as treasurer, and David Burton, Freddy Lama, and Christian Gartman as members.

U.S. promises flexibility in stalled climate talks

KYOTO, Japan (AFP) — U.S. Vice President Al Gore stuck by Washington's disputed offer at talks Monday in Japan to avert catastrophic warming of the globe but promised flexibility.

Mr. Gore said the United States "remains firmly committed" to its offer to stabilise at 1990 levels by 2008-12 its emissions of greenhouse gases blamed for trapping the Earth's heat.

But the vice president said he and President Bill Clinton had been "burning up phone lines" to the world's capitals to hold consultations about the negotiations in Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto.

"After talking with our negotiators this morning and after speaking on the telephone from here a short time ago with President Clinton, I am instructing our delegation right now to show increased negotiating flexibility," he said.

Such flexibility would be shown "if a comprehensive plan can be put in place, one with realistic targets and timetables, market mechanisms and the meaningful participation of developing countries."

Mr. Gore addressed the final three-day ministerial stage of the 10-day U.N. conference of 159 nations that aims to clamp legally-binding cuts on developed nations' output of greenhouse gases by Wednesday.

British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott said he had met with Mr. Gore and the negotiation "leads me to believe that the flexibility and political will is there to achieve agreement."

A European Union diplomatic source said major powers including the EU, Japan and United States had agreed to deal with just three gases in Kyoto and

deal with three others within the next year.

The sticking points were the size of any cuts, demands for major developing nation polluters such as China and India to make commitments in Kyoto and the U.S. call for limited trading of emission permits, he said.

Mr. Gore told the talks that "for our part the United States remains firmly committed to a strong, binding target that will reduce our own emissions by nearly 30 per cent from what they would otherwise be."

The United States argues that its effort to achieve no change from 1990 levels by 2008-12 represents a large cut from what emissions would be under a business-as-usual scenario.

The U.S. commitment was "as strong, or stronger, than any we have heard

here from any country," Mr. Gore said. "The imperative here is to do what we promise rather than what we cannot do."

Washington argues that the EU call for a 15 per cent cut from 1990 levels by 2010 is not realistic. Japan has offered a five per cent cut from 1990 by 2008-12.

The U.S. proposal, however, comprises six greenhouse gases while the EU and Japan include only three.

Mr. Gore sought to appease developing nations who have fiercely rejected U.S. demands that they agree to legally-binding commitments on greenhouse gas emissions in Kyoto.

The United States realized their first priority was to eradicate poverty and build strong economies, Mr. Gore said. "This is your

right and it will not be denied," he added.

"We do not want to founder on a false divide," Mr. Gore said. "We want to forge a lasting partnership to achieve a better future."

The vice president said the U.S. proposal "provides the means to ensure that all nations can join us on their own terms in meeting this common challenge."

But China refused to entertain any binding commitment in Kyoto.

"The Chinese delegation is opposed to the introduction of any new commitments for developing countries," said Chinese delegation chief Chen Yaobang.

Beijing was also against the "launching of any negotiating process that attempts to introduce new commitments for developing countries," he said.

Mr. Gore said the United States would press ahead with its own domestic agenda if the Kyoto talks failed.

"Whether or not agreement is reached here, we will take concrete steps to meet this challenge," the vice president said. "I commit to you today that the United States is prepared to act and will act."

He was "determined and optimistic that we can succeed" and he had no doubt that the process would inevitably lead to a solution "in the days or years ahead."

EU spokesman Johnny Lahure attacked demands that developing nations make new commitments in Kyoto as "not helpful," insisting that developed nations take the lead.

According to U.N. estimates, current emission trends are likely to cause average global temperatures to rise 1.0 to 3.5 degrees Celsius over the next 100 years.



U.S. Vice President Al Gore (right) and British Vice Prime Minister John Prescott sit down for their talks after the opening session of the high-level segment attended by ministers and heads of delegates for the U.N. conference on climate change at Kyoto International Conference Hall (AFP photo)

Special parliament session likely on Bangladesh peace pact

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladesh's ruling Awami League has decided to call a special parliamentary session to debate the peace pact with southeastern tribal rebels which has sparked an opposition general strike, a report said Monday.

The Mukhtakantha daily said the decision was made at a party meeting late Sunday chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed. It said the party would ask President Shahabuddin Ahmed to convene the session during the second half of December.

Official sources Monday said it was very likely the session would be convened after the prime minister returns later this week from the Tehran summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

The reported decision came after a day-long nationwide general strike called by opposition parties Sunday in protest at the peace pact. It was marked by violence in several districts including the capital Dhaka and the Khagrachari hill district.

A seven-party opposition alliance led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has called for fresh stoppages Wednesday and Thursday in the southeastern port city of Chittagong and the hill districts of Bandarban, Khagrachari

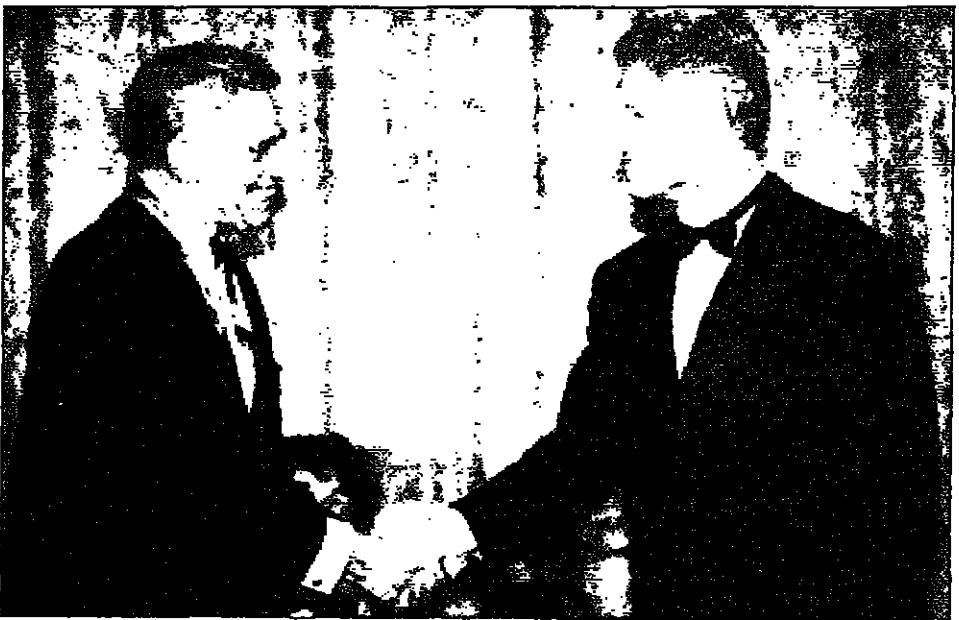
and Ranganati.

The alliance says the pact, which ends a 22-year insurgency, is "unconstitutional" and a "black treaty."

Sunday Sheikh Hasina challenged her rivals to debate the pact in parliament and stop giving "distorted" versions of the country's constitution.

Answering opposition charges that hill councils set up under the pact amounted to a parallel government, she said Dhaka had the power to dissolve them at any time and would have appointed members sitting on them.

The 22-year insurgency led by Shanti Bahini rebels in the southeastern hills has left 25,000 people dead by unofficial estimates.



U.S. President Bill Clinton (right) congratulates actor Charlton Heston for being named a Kennedy Centre Honours recipient at the White House (AFP photo)

Washington elite honour Dylan, Bacall, Heston

WASHINGTON (R) — Washington's power elite joined in a tribute Sunday to Bob Dylan, Charlton Heston, Lauren Bacall, opera soprano Jessye Norman and dancer Edward Villella at the Kennedy Centre Honours.

President Bill Clinton, federal reserve board Chairman Alan Greenspan and House of Representatives speaker Newt Gingrich were among those who celebrated the five artists in a black-tie affair.

The longest standing ovation went to Dylan, the most influential pop musician of his era. Dylan often appeared uncomfortable accepting the applause.

Actor Gregory Peck, a 1991 Kennedy Centre Honouree, told the audience that in Dylan's songs, "we hear the echoes of old American voices."

Bruce Springsteen sang "The Times They Are A-Changin'" one of Dylan's best-known songs from the 1960s. Shirley Caesar performed an electrifying version of Dylan's "You Gotta Serve Somebody" that had Mr. Greenspan and Mr. Gingrich swaying in their seats.

The 1997 set of Kennedy Centre Honourees reflected the diversity of American artistic expression, with the 21-member executive board

showing its customary bias towards the silver screen.

Bacall is best known for her sultry looks and smouldering glances in such movies as "To Have and Have Not," in which she made her film debut in 1944 at age 19.

She married her co-star from that film and for 11 years until his death Bacall and screen legend Humphrey Bogart were one of Hollywood's most famous and romantic couples.

Heston used his commanding features and presence to great effect in films such as "Ben Hur" for which he won an academy award in 1959. For many people, Heston's face is the face of Moses, who he portrayed in Cecil B. DeMille's biblical epic "The Ten Commandments" in 1956.

Heston is well-known in recent years as a defender of gun rights for the National Rifle Association.

Norman, raised in poverty in Augusta, Georgia, was praised by actor Sidney Poitier, a 1995 Kennedy Centre honouree.

"All I know is if God is a woman, then Jessye is her voice," he said.

Despite her humble origins, Norman impressed music professors enough at Howard University in Washington to give her a four-year scholar-

New Zealand's 1st woman premier is sworn in

WELLINGTON (R) — New Zealand's first woman prime minister, Jenny Shipley, was officially sworn in Monday, taking over from Jim Bolger as leader of the two-party centre-right coalition.

In a ceremony at Wellington's government house, Governor-General Sir Michael Hardie Boys signed a warrant appointing Ms. Shipley shortly after accepting Mr. Bolger's resignation.

Mr. Bolger is standing down after seven years at the helm, having run three different governments built around the conservative national party.

Ms. Shipley ousted Mr. Bolger as party leader in a swiftly executed coup a month ago. She said her main motive was to revitalise the government, but analysts believe she was also responding to the coalition's recent plunge in popularity.

A broad-shouldered former school teacher from national right, the 45-year-old is considered to be to the right of Mr. Bolger on economic policy and has a reputation as a pragmatist.

Her rapid rise began when she leaptfrogged into the National Party shadow cabinet just two years after entering politics in 1987.

Appointed social welfare minister after National swept to power in 1990, Ms. Shipley led the dismantling of much of what was left of New Zealand's welfare state.

The policy was unpopular and Ms. Shipley saw protesters burning her effigy in the streets.

After national retained government in the 1993 election, she took on the demanding health portfolio and added to her no-nonsense reputation.

When Mr. Bolger formed the two-party government with populist New Zealand first almost exactly a year ago, the man known as the "great conciliator" was to find a new system of proportional representation worked against him.

Mr. Bolger's willingness to embrace consensus politics and appease his coalition partner NZ First saw him labelled as "soft" by his backbenchers, and they turned to Ms. Shipley for stronger leadership.

However, a cabinet reshuffle by Ms. Shipley detailed last Friday made only limited changes and seemed to indicate she had no desire to upset the coalition balance.

NZ first leader and Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters has responded cautiously to Ms. Shipley's rise to power, holding back the support of his party for several weeks and expressing concern at a possible move to the right.

In media interviews Ms. Shipley has signalled that she plans only limited policy initiatives in the few days before parliament breaks for the summer Thursday.

However, she has said that a key speech in February will show the direction of core plans for social policy.

"There will be a series of initiatives in the social policy area which will draw people's attention to what governments can seriously do, but (also) what parents and families must expect to do for themselves," she told the dominion newspaper in an interview published Monday.

She also stressed that she believed social issues such as education, health and welfare would dominate the agenda until the next election, due in late 1999.

"If we don't make progress in these areas, then all of the economic success of the last decade and a half will be valued for nothing," she said.

Political analysts said Ms. Shipley would probably set out her agenda to parliament on Feb. 17 when it is expected to reconvene after its recess.

Biko memory haunts S. Africa's search for the truth

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa (R) — South Africa's truth commission resumes efforts Monday to expose the facts surrounding the death of prominent black activist Steve Biko 20 years ago.

Five security policemen who interrogated Biko shortly before he died in September 1977 have applied to the commission for amnesty from prosecution.

They are among few apartheid-era officials to seek pardon and their decision to testify is one of the biggest successes for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was set up to expose abuses in the fight over apartheid.

The commission heard testimony in September from the head of the interrogation squad, former Colonel Harold Snyman, who said Biko died of brain damage after knocking his head against a wall during a scuffle.

Mr. Snyman said Biko had attacked his interrogators

and, in an effort to subdue him and protect themselves, a fight had ensued which left him mumbling, unresponsive and disoriented.

Biko was then manacled and chained to the bars of his prison cell, Mr. Snyman said, to check if he was faking his injuries.

The family of the black consciousness leader rejected Mr. Snyman's testimony as a pack of lies and other sceptical observers said they hoped the whole truth would emerge when the four other policemen gave evidence this week.

At least one of the policemen said in his written amnesty application that Biko was actually rammed head-first into a wall during his interrogation.

Uncontested evidence is that, after suffering serious injury at the hands of his captors, Biko was driven naked and unconscious from Port Elizabeth on the east coast to a prison in Pretoria, 1,200 kilometres away, where he

died.

Biko's family, which has consistently campaigned for his killers to be brought to trial, is opposing amnesty for the five.

Nobel Peace Laureate Desmond Tutu's truth commission can indemnify perpetrators of gross human rights abuses, who do not need to apologise, but must make a full confession and show their actions were motivated by politics.

Its task is to uncover as much of the truth as possible behind apartheid-era crimes as well to foster reconciliation in a nation torn racial oppression.

During his life Biko gained prominence as a black consciousness leader within South Africa, but it was his death at the hands of the security police that made him a world famous icon of the anti-apartheid struggle.

The truth commission's amnesty panel has set aside a week to hear the testimony of the policemen.

Dissident calls on China's activists to unite

BEIJING (AFP) — Veteran dissident Li Xiaolong urged China's human rights activists Monday to learn from Taiwan and form a united front to bring democracy to the nation.

In an open letter to China's dissidents, Mr. Li — who lives in the southern boomtown of Shenzhen — said the strong showing of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwan's recent local elections was a turning point in China's history.

"The success of the DPP in Taiwan marks the start of a new historic phase in the democratisation of China and gives us a new chance to bring about a democratic system," he said.

"The case of Taiwan has shown us that you must have a strong organisation to survive the tests of time and you must have the support of the people and use every favourable circumstance," he added.

"The voice of democracy shouts loud from both inside and outside the Great Wall," said Mr. Li, who has set up an organisation called the Committee of the Voice of Human Rights.

"But if we hope for the success of the democratic movement in China, we have to unify our forces, form a national front and fix a common goal. We must also build up a ruling body in order to form an organisational base to welcome the new wave of democracy in China," he added.

In late November, Mr. Li also wrote an open letter to President Jiang Zemin calling on him to "put an end to the dictatorship of the party."

Mexico offers \$1m reward for drug kingpins

MEXICO CITY (R) — Mexico is offering a \$1 million reward for information leading to the capture of three brothers who head a dangerous drug cartel and allegedly ordered the recent shooting of a well-known Mexican journalist.

The attorney general's office said in statement it would pay 8 million pesos — a little more than \$1 million — to anyone who helped police capture any of the Arellano Felix brothers: Benjamin, Ramon and Francisco Javier.

The Arellano Felix family heads the so-called Tijuana Cartel, known for its violence in drug turf wars. Cartel hitmen on Nov. 27 attacked Jesus Blancomelas, editor of a

newsweekly that regularly covers the drug trade.

Hit by as many as four bullets, Mr. Blancomelas was still recovering in hospital Sunday, nearly two weeks after the attack which claimed the lives of his bodyguard and one of the assailants, a well-known gunman for the drug cartel.

Ramon Arellano is already on the FBI's 10 most wanted list — a distinction that earned him a \$2 million bounty on his head. Experts say famous drug kingpins such as the late Pablo Escobar in Colombia were worth as much as \$6 million in reward money.

"The Arellano Felix drug cartel, known as the 'Tijuana Cartel,' is considered to be one of the most

vicious, ruthless criminal organisations involved in smuggling drugs into the United States," FBI Director Louis Freeh said at a news conference earlier this year.

The drug gang has long been a headache to officials on both sides of the border. In 1993, its gunmen were involved in the fatal shooting of Catholic Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo, who officials say was killed in a case of mistaken identity.

Mexican Attorney General Jorge Madrazo has said that U.S. agents have just as much chance of capturing the cartel leaders as the Mexican ones because they often cross the border onto U.S. soil.



Cambodia's king says no fair election without all

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk said Monday it would be impossible to hold a fair election in his troubled country without first achieving reconciliation and allowing all Cambodians to take part.

The king did not name his deposed son, Prince Norodom Ranariddh, but stressed that an election could not be free and fair unless everyone was allowed to participate.

"The elections cannot be fair and free without you, without the participation of all — all — Cambodians," the king told a group of Prince Ranariddh's supporters.

First Prime Minister Ranariddh was deposed by Second Prime Minister Hun Sen in early July.

Norodom Sihanouk, speaking to the group in his Phnom Penh palace, also said there must be full respect for human rights and the liberal, democratic provisions of the country's constitution before a fair election could be held.

Hun Sen has said all politicians can take part in an election scheduled for May, but Prince Ranariddh and two of his top aides must first face trial on security-related charges.

Prince Ranariddh, who was out of the country at the time of his ouster, says the charges later filed against him are politically motivated and designed to block his return to politics.

Norodom Sihanouk has made clear his disapproval of Hun Sen's takeover, but as a neutral head of state the monarch has tried, so far without success, to promote reconciliation between his son and Hun Sen.

"National reconciliation and the return of Cambodia to a full respect for human rights and full respect for the provisions of the liberal constitution we have, they must be achieved before the elections," the king said.

"How can we have elections before national reconciliation, before enabling all Cambodians... to work together once again in order to prepare such elections?" he asked.

Norodom Sihanouk, 75, returned to Phnom Penh from China, where he has been undergoing medical treatment, last week on his first trip to the Cambodian capital since Hun Sen's coup.

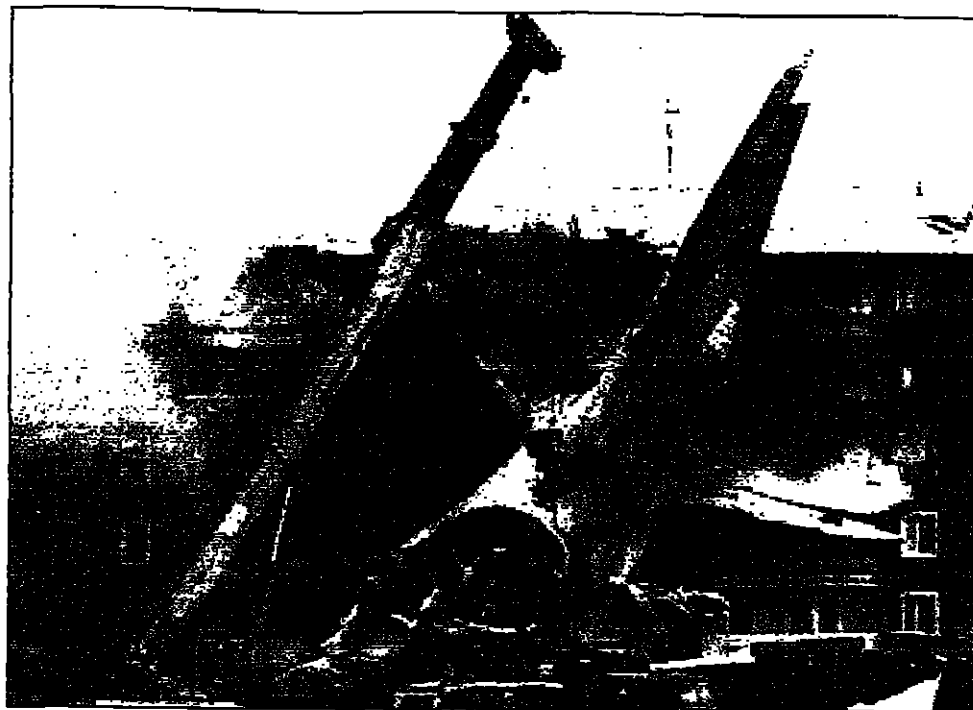
The international community, including the United States and Cambodia's neighbours in the region, have been insisting that Prince Ranariddh be allowed to take part in the upcoming poll.

But Hun Sen has insisted the prince face charges of smuggling weapons and colluding with the outlawed Khmer Rouge guerrilla group. Hun Sen has also said he would support a royal amnesty for Prince Ranariddh if he were found guilty, which would allow the prince to run in the election.

Prince Ranariddh has rejected Hun Sen's offer, saying he would never receive a fair trial in a Cambodian court. The king said recently that he also doubted that Prince Ranariddh would ever get a fair trial in Cambodia.

Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen formed a coalition government with Norodom Sihanouk's encouragement after the U.N.-run election in 1993, which the Prince narrowly won.

But their administration was plagued by bitter rows over the distribution of power between them and competition for the allegiance of defecting Khmer Rouge guerrillas.



Firefighters climb on the tail of the fuselage of a Russian Antonov AN-124 cargo plane which crashed into a housing area in Irkutsk II, an industrial suburb of the Siberian town. Rescue teams were sifting through the charred wreckage of the 3-storey building that was totally demolished by the military plane in the crash, but Monday said they had lost hope of finding more survivors (AFP photo)

Australian PM talks tough over landrights bill

CANBERRA (AFP) — Australian Prime Minister John Howard Monday warned against speculation over the date of an early election he has threatened to call if parliament blocks aboriginal landrights legislation.

He said while the government would have the option of a double dissolution election if the senate refused a second time to pass the legislation in an acceptable form, the impasse had not yet happened.

"Don't get too excited about the timing of the next election — I'm not, you shouldn't be," he told the National Press Club here.

The upper house last week amended key sections of the native title bill which had sought to largely reverse rights to which the high court ruled Aborigines were entitled.

The bill will go back to

the upper house in three months and Mr. Howard has warned that if, as expected, it is subject to major changes again he will use it as the trigger for an early election.

Mr. Howard also dismissed polls Sunday showing his government trailing the Labour opposition saying it was common for governments to record a mid-term slump as U.S. President Bill Clinton, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and previous Australian governments had all done.

"It's part of the political process — I don't know why you should find it so extraordinary," he said.

Mr. Howard also described suggestions that his 10-point native title plan could be likened to South Africa's apartheid regime as "sickening hypocrisy."

"Anybody who runs

around saying our position is similar or can be likened to the stance taken by the discredited apartheid regime in South Africa is deliberately inflaming the situation, wants race to be an issue and is behaving in a provocative, quite dishonest fashion," he said.

Mr. Howard was responding to New South Wales state Premier Bob Carr, who said Australia could be seen to be populated by citizens like the white South Africans of the 1960s if the government called an election over native title.

However, the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Chair Evelyn Scott warned that a double dissolution would be disastrous for the government.

"It will be damaging for reconciliation and... I believe it will be political suicide for the government," Mr. Scott said.

Russia says it may sign landmine ban soon

MOSCOW (R) — Russia is ready to join an international ban on use of landmines after finding a substitute for anti-personnel mines it uses to guard nuclear and other military installations, the foreign ministry said Monday.

Interfax news agency quoted Gennady Tarasov, a senior ministry official, as saying Russia would

sign the ban treaty "within a reasonable future time-frame" but gave no further information.

He did not say how many installations were protected by landmines or when he expected them to be replaced.

Last week a total of 121 nations signed an historic treaty to ban anti-personnel landmines worldwide.

But three major powers — the United States, Russia and China — and most Middle Eastern nations have refused to sign the treaty, saying there was still some need for landmines.

But Russia extended its five-year self-imposed moratorium on exports of mines by another five years from Dec. 1.

Russian rescuers to end search for crash survivors

IRKUTSK, Russia (R) — Siberian rescue workers said Monday they had lost all hope of finding any more survivors from the charred wreckage of a huge military plane that plunged into an apartment building, killing scores of people.

At a news conference in Irkutsk, Emergency Minister Sergei Shoigu said workers had found 41 bodies and 16 body fragments.

He added that some people were still unaccounted for. Earlier he told reporters at the scene the final death toll could reach 62.

"There are too many unidentified bodies and fragments. I cannot imagine for now what to do with all of them. We have loads of people working in the morgue for that," Mr. Shoigu said.

The cause of the crash, which set fire to several buildings including an orphanage where two children died, was not immediately known.

But Interfax news agency quoted sources in Irkutsk, about 5,000 km east of Moscow, as saying the crew reported that two engines failed just before the Antonov-124 aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff.

NTV commercial tele-

vision said another theory was that the plane's cargo — two Sukhoi fighter jets bound for export to Vietnam — had not been properly loaded.

The plane crashed into an apartment building housing 106 people and just missed an orphanage nearby where two children died and five were injured in the ensuing fires.

About 150 children and 300 other people had to be evacuated.

Russian television showed pictures of several badly burned children and said many others were still in a state of shock.

"I thought it was an earthquake," said Andrei Derevyanchuk, a 53-year-old pensioner who lived in the building now turned to ashes. "I grabbed my daughter, barely dressed, her kid, and went to the window. There was fire all over the place."

"We managed to get out through the stairway, but my wife, she was left behind. She stood by the window suffocating on the smoke and we could not do anything. Thank God, fire-fighters managed to save her," Mr. Derevyanchuk told Reuters.

Nadezhda Khamaza,

51, said her son saved all her family from the burning building. "He took out everyone shortly after the crash, then put on his own fire-fighting clothes and took out our 84-year-old grandmother."

But they were among the few lucky families to survive the tragedy. Natalya Davydova, who lived next door to Derevyanchuk, lost her two teenage sons, Denis and Zhenya, in the fire.

Officials said the death toll could have been far higher if the town's gas supply had not been coincidentally cut off shortly before the crash.

Local residents were raising money and collecting clothes for the homeless victims of the disaster. ITAR-TASS news agency said the east Siberian railways would donate one billion rubles (\$169,000) and two apartments.

Most of the aircraft's vast fuselage appeared to have disintegrated or burned after the crash but the white tailplane, decorated with a red star, was stuck awkwardly in the side and roof of the four-storey building.

The building itself was covered with ice after fire-fighters poured water over it for hours to put out the fires which broke

out after the crash. The 11-year-old plane, which had a total weight of 340 tonnes, was carrying 110 tonnes of aviation fuel.

The crash disaster was the fifth accident involving the an-124 since 1992. An AN-124 freighter crashed near Turin, Italy, last year, killing two crew members and two Italian villagers.

The Antonov-124 is one of the world's largest planes. It is nearly 70 metres long, has a wingspan of more than 73 metres and has a maximum capacity of 120 tonnes.

Russia's Defence Ministry said Sunday it had suspended all an-124 flights until the cause of the accident was known. Military prosecutors have launched a criminal investigation.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, head of a commission set up to investigate the crash, inspected the site Sunday.

He visited the scene of another disaster Monday in the western Siberian town of Novokuznetsk. Last Tuesday 67 coal miners were killed in an underground gas explosion.

New 'dataholics' generation on rise — survey

LONDON (R) — A generation of "dataholics" is on the rise, with over half the respondents to a new survey commissioned by Reuters saying they crave information, especially from computers and the Internet.

The international survey of 1,000 business people, released Tuesday, said 53 per cent admitted to craving information and 54 per cent claimed to get a "high" when they find what they have been seeking in an electronic search.

At the same time they often feel overwhelmed by all the information at their disposal, and worry that their children are turning into info-junkies too. Forty-six per cent of those surveyed said their children already prefer computers to their peers.

The survey is called "Glued to the screen: an investigation into informa-

tion addiction worldwide" and is based on interviews with people in Britain, the United States, Ireland, Germany, Singapore and Hong Kong.

"Is information the drug of the nineties?" asked Mark Griffiths, a psychologist and senior lecturer at Nottingham University, commenting on the survey.

"Have we become fact-fanatics and info-junkies? There is a very fine line between having enough information and getting too much," Griffiths said.

"This report reveals a clear linkage between Internet abuse, data accumulation and information addiction," he said.

Paul Waddington, a spokesman for Reuters, the Global News and Information Group, said information-gathering in itself was not the problem.

"It's a problem when it starts to affect the way peo-

ple perform in business, and in the way it affects their home life," he said.

"When people are spending three or four hours on the Internet, clearly it is not good for productivity at work, and the same thing is true at home," he said.

The survey said 80 per cent of respondents felt driven to gather as much information as possible to keep up with customers and competitors, but over half of them felt unable to handle all the information that they accumulated.

A whopping 97 per cent believed their companies would benefit from information management training. Eighty-six per cent believed schools and colleges should be doing more to prepare children to deal effectively with information.

"I don't think this is an argument in favour of the Luddite view of technolo-

gy. It is to support the effective use of technology, and not to have time wasted by fruitless browsing," Mr. Waddington said.

The results of the survey also reflect the fact that the Internet is very disorganised, he said.

Three hundred of those surveyed were parents. Of this group, 36 per cent worried that their children were over-exposed to information.

"If the children had their heads buried in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, they wouldn't worry at all. They are concerned that what their children are doing online isn't productive or helping their development," Mr. Waddington said.

The survey follows a 1996 Reuters report which found that increasing numbers of people suffer ill health due to the stress of information overload.

8-year-old gives birth

MULTAN, Pakistan (AFP) — An eight-year-old Pakistani girl who became pregnant after allegedly being raped by two men has given birth to an underweight but healthy baby, doctors said Monday.

The girl delivered the baby late Sunday in the rural town of Alipur, 130 kilometres southwest of here. Doctor Ashiq Hussain said.

She gave birth in the hospital's courtyard with the help of an accompanying midwife before she could be taken inside by staff, the doctor said, adding that the girl's parents took her and the baby back to their village.

According to hospital staff the mother and baby, who weighed four pounds, were in a stable condition. Dr. Hussain said.

The parents have alleged two men raped the girl who underwent puberty at an abnormally early age.

Local police said the men, aged 18 and 20, were arrested in October and booked for criminal assault under the country's Islamic Hudood law, which lays down imprisonment of up to 14 years and whipping for the offence.

Communication trouble between the two aeroplanes could have caused the crash, local police official Michel Theriault said, adding that the small airfield lacks a control tower.

4 dead as two small planes collide

MONTREAL (AFP) — Two small Cessna aeroplanes, each carrying two people, collided some 70 metres above an airport outside Montreal Sunday, killing all four on board, local police said.

The accident occurred as the two aircraft prepared to land at Mascouche air-

port, 30 kilometres north-east of here around 2:30 p.m. (1930 GMT).

Communication trouble between the two aeroplanes could have caused the crash, local police official Michel Theriault said, adding that the small airfield lacks a control tower.

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The stakes are high for all

THE FIRST, second and even third reading of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's limited redeployment offer to the Palestinians indicates that it is indeed void of all substance. By linking the proposal to withdraw by an unidentifiable extent from the Palestinian areas to a set of conditions that are impossible to pin-point or satisfy, the Israeli offer becomes patently hollow and a ploy for extra procrastination. There is already a wide consensus that the latest Israeli ideas on how to advance the faltering peace process will come to naught.

The next issue that needs to be addressed is what to do in the face of continuing Israeli delaying tactics and intransigence. There is no question in this regard that the only alternative is to invite the U.S. to be more forceful in dealing with this persistent Israeli record of defiance. The lack of U.S. endorsement of the latest Israeli offer suggests that Washington cannot be easily fooled as Netanyahu may have thought when he made his infamous "overture" to the Palestinians. Surely President Bill Clinton has many more cards to play against the defiant Israeli prime minister. His Majesty King Hussein has already outlined his sense of indignation over Netanyahu's betrayal of his own promises.

The King made it clear in as many weeks that the Israeli government's policies were bound to destroy the current peace effort and possibly the whole peace process.

It stands to reason that the warm peace that once prevailed between Jordan and Israel cannot be expected to go anywhere except backward as long as the state of the peace process remains where it is now. Egyptian-Israeli relations are also strained to the point of being on the verge of collapse. The Palestinians appear to be on the brink of waging another wide-scale intifada to vent their grievances and desperation. Netanyahu himself is in the unenviable position of being hostage to his extreme right-wing allies who never stopped threatening to topple him should he opt for compromise with the Palestinians.

The stage seems set for major upheavals in the region unless there is a real change of course in Israel. The stakes are high not only for the Arab side but also for the international community which has pinned high hopes on the peace process to settle the long-standing Arab-Israeli conflict. This is where the international community, in addition to the Arab World, needs to make its views heard loud and clear on how to proceed from this moment on.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Daoud Qameh described the gathering of the heads of Islamic nations in Tehran as only a superficial show of solidarity among Muslim nations. For its part, Iran seeks to benefit from such a gathering in a bid to mobilise the Iranian people behind its leadership at a time when the Gulf region is threatened with American military strikes and when the internal situation in Iran is in turmoil, said the writer. Despite its hosting of the Islamic summit, Qameh said, Iran realises all too well that its relations with its Arab neighbours remain strained due to its own policies towards the Arabs, especially with regard to Iraq and the Arab Gulf states. Although the Arabs and Muslims badly need to establish solidarity in the face of the external dangers, Muslim and Arab nations' relations remain strained, and the series of Islamic meetings organised by the Organisation of Islamic Conference countries has failed till now to achieve a single objective to convince the Arab and Muslim masses of the urgency of such meetings, according to the writer. Still, he said, the Muslim and Arab masses are looking to see if this summit in Tehran will succeed in passing a single item.

Al Dustour daily addressed the marking of the 10th anniversary of the start of the intifada in Palestine which falls Tuesday, reminding the world that it was the uprising of the oppressed that brought the plight of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation to the attention of the world. It was the intifada that opened the eyes of the Israeli society to the facts on the ground and forced the Israeli leadership to admit that the Palestinians have legitimate rights, the paper said. With their uprising against tyranny, said the paper, the Palestinians proved to the world that the will of the masses cannot be stifled through oppression. It said that it was the intifada that forced the Israeli leaders to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation which they had been describing as a terrorist organisation. Al Dustour said that before the intifada there was no hope of an Israeli pull-out from even one inch of the occupied Arab lands, but now, through pressure from the Palestinian people and the world community, Israel is facing the inevitable withdrawal which is to come sooner or later.

By Donald Neff

WASHINGTON DC — While vowing to seek a diplomatic solution to the crisis with Iraq and simultaneously sending more military forces to the Gulf, the Clinton administration has launched a supercharged campaign to portray Saddam Hussein as a threat to the whole world. President Clinton led off on Nov. 14 by warning that "this is not just a replay of the Gulf war. This is about the security of the 21st century and the problems everybody is going to have to face dealing with chemical weapons." That same day he ordered the USS George Washington aircraft carrier and its battle group to join the carrier USS Nimitz in the Gulf. More reinforcements were expected to be on their way soon.

The next day the president said: "I want you to look at it forward, and think of it in terms of the innocent Japanese people who died in the subway when the Sarin gas was released... It is important for every responsible government in the world to do everything that can possibly be done not to let big stores of chemical or biological weapons fall into the wrong hands, not to let irresponsible people develop the capacity to put those big warheads on missiles or put them in briefcases that can be exploded in small rooms."

Although Clinton asserted that "I say this not to frighten you," it was clear the administration was out to do, exactly that. Pentagon Spokesman Kenneth Bacon on Nov. 14 gave reporters a description of the lethal effects of several nerve agents that Iraq is believed to possess. "The inhalation of just a ninth of a millionth of a gramme of anthrax is fatal within five to seven days one hundred per cent of the time," said Bacon.

Defence Secretary William S. Cohen followed that by going on a Sunday TV talk show and declaring that Iraq in recent years has possessed enough chemical and biological agents to kill "millions" of people. To dramatise his point, Cohen displayed a five-pound bag of sugar, saying that if it were filled with anthrax it could "destroy at least half the population" of Washington. Then he held up a small vial and said that "one single drop" of a nerve agent called VX "will kill you within a few minutes." He said United Nations inspectors found 3.9 tonnes of VX and 2,100 gallons of anthrax at a time that Iraq was claiming to have little or none of the substances. "This is a global threat," Cohen declared.

Cohen pointedly noted that Iraq has mis-

siles that can fly 3,000 kilometres, suggesting that not only Middle East nations were in peril. The Pentagon chief also noted that while President Clinton has not set "an artificial countdown or deadline" for military action, Saddam Hussein would have time to rebuild Iraq's arsenal if the impasse dragged on "weeks or months." Thus, he said, the administration is "well aware of the ticking of the clock."

To emphasise the potential horror, White House National Security Adviser Samuel Berger went on a different national talk show and said that U.N. inspectors cannot account for 2,500 gallons of anthrax, adding that U.S. officials suspect Iraq has it on hand or could reconstitute it. "You inhale that gas, you die in five days."

Albright's frantic efforts

At the same time, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was tearing around four Gulf states in a single day trying to shore up Arab support. She started her day on November 16 in Qatar to open the MENA economic conference, but cut her visit to three hours because most Arabs had boycotted it in protest of Israel's intransigence. So she had to go to them. In quick visits to Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, she received support for demanding that Iraq obey U.N. resolutions — if not public support for the use of force.

Nonetheless, she declared: "The people of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the countries I have visited, are the front line, and if Saddam does not back down they will be the first ones to be threatened. I am here to signal that the United States will not let that happen."

Albright insisted that diplomacy was being pursued, mainly through Russia and France, two countries that have opposed force. U.S. officials revealed that Albright and President Clinton had several telephone conversations with Russian and French leaders in mid-November, as well as British leaders. In Kuwait, she said: "In our effort to build diplomatic pressure, we look to Russia and France, because of their unique ability to communicate with Saddam Hussein, to convince him that the only way out is to change course." State Department Spokesman James Rubin later explained: "The Russians in particular and the French have had influence over Saddam Hussein in the past. The idea is that they would be in the best position to convey to him the steeliness of the will of the international community to resolve this problem."

The problem for Washington is that

while the flexing of military muscle makes the public feel good — polls show overwhelming support if Iraq tries to shoot down a U-2 plane — the practical effects of air strikes are severely limited. Certainly U.S. forces could deter or repel an Iraqi ground thrust towards Kuwait. But as far as addressing the immediate problems of maintaining a U.S. presence on the U.N. inspection teams and destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, air strikes offer little leverage.

American officials believe that Saddam Hussein is ready to bleed to the last drop of blood of other Iraqis, as demonstrated by his ploy to surround his palaces and other potential targets with hundreds of women, children and old men. Military experts strongly doubt that the Iraqi president can be found and killed by an air strike. Moreover, they do not believe his various storage and production sites of mass weapons can be destroyed from the air. Even if they could be found, the U.S. does not have conventional weapons that can penetrate the likely depths of Iraq's underground storage areas.

It is being widely noted that during the Gulf war the U.S.-led coalition dropped more than 88,000 tonnes of bombs on Iraq, crippling the country's infrastructure — not killing Saddam Hussein or destroying all of his missile and biological and chemical weapons. In fact, more of his weapons' capacity has been destroyed by U.N. inspectors since the war than during it. Nor did the bombs persuade him to withdraw from Kuwait. It was probably with this dismal reality in mind that Defence Secretary Cohen said: "We're not looking to bomb anyone back into either a Stone Age or into any sort of submission."

On the other hand, Washington has left no doubt that it will react violently against any Iraqi effort to shoot down U.S. U-2 reconnaissance planes piloted by Americans but under the command of the U.N. National Security Adviser Berger said on Nov. 16 that the next U-2 flight would take place "in the next few days," adding: "If he were to fire on those planes, it would be a big mistake and it would have serious consequences." A senior Pentagon official warned anonymously on November 14 that firing on a U-2 would be "an act of war," a statement noted by Clinton without comment.

Where the blame lies

Meanwhile, Secretary Albright had nobody to blame for the MENA conference disaster but America's own biased

policy towards Israel. The vigour with which the U.S. was pressing demands that Iraq obey U.N. resolutions contrasted too glaringly with Washington's friendly tolerance of Israel's defiance of far more U.N. resolutions against it going back half a century. The contrast was also stark between Washington's demonisation of Iraq's weapons and its quiet acceptance of Israel's weapons of mass destruction. There was no rational explanation for the difference beyond domestic politics. The Clinton administration tried to paper over the discrepancy but its words and actions were too tepid to satisfy anyone beyond Israel.

For his part, the president refused to see Prime Minister Netanyahu during his U.S. visit in mid-November, not exactly a heroic gesture but unusual for this totally pro-Israel leader. The White House, of course, insisted it was only a matter of finding a mutually accommodating schedule. But it did not go unnoticed that the president found time to meet King Hussein and attend a birthday party for him just before Netanyahu's arrival.

Albright did about as much as she could within the constraints she must operate. Her convening of talks with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Palestinian negotiator Abu Mazen in Washington between November 3-6 was another failure to get the Israelis to keep their Oslo word. Albright then tried to apply pressure with high-profile meetings with Netanyahu in London on November 14 and Yasser Arafat the next day in Bern. Those meetings had no more success.

Albright tried to pacify the Arabs at Doha by criticising Israel, though as usual subtly. She said at the opening of the conference, without directly mentioning Israel: "Partners have obligations — to make their partners stronger, not weaker. To act in the spirit of peace. To take into account the needs and views of others. To focus not on creating but on removing obstacles to peace. And to contribute to an atmosphere in which the violent extremes are marginalised and the roots of trust may grow." She added: "Unfortunately, time is not on our side. Every week that goes by without a renewal of serious momentum towards peace creates new opportunities for the enemies of peace, and adds to the discouragement of those on all sides who urgently desire peace." Her remarks were accurate as far as they went. Unfortunately, she did not acknowledge that the major fault lay in Washington.

Middle East International

10 years later, intifada tallies achievements, shortfalls

By Ray Hanania

IN THE summer of 1968, daily television broadcasts of the war in Vietnam helped turn American public opinion around from overwhelming support for the war to massive opposition.

Almost 20 years later, and nearly by accident, the Palestinians learned the same lesson — that by bringing the reality of Israel's brutal occupation to American television screens might make a difference.

On Tuesday, Dec. 8, 1987, a group of Palestinians confronted Israeli soldiers on the streets of the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians wore civilian clothes and carried stones. The Israelis were heavily armed and wore protective military uniforms.

In the confrontation that morning, 16-year-old Hatem Abu Siseh was killed. He wasn't even born when the Israelis, exploiting the empty bombastic threats of Arab leaders, started the 1967 war by invading Egypt, Jordan and Syria and occupying the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Arab East Jerusalem, the Sinai Peninsula

and the Golan Heights.

It was a humiliation that caused Palestinians to realise that they could not rely on the Arab World for liberation from Israeli occupation. They launched a "revolution" intended to draw worldwide attention to their cause.

But years of hijackings and bombings targeting civilians only caused public opinion to harden, especially in the United States which provided most of the funding for the Israeli occupation and its aggression.

The intifada was different. Every day Americans turned on their television sets to see heavily armed Israelis firing live ammunition at women and children carrying stones.

Unlike in Israel, American forces are prohibited from firing on civilians, even when the civilians throw stones. The one exception was the gunning down of four students at Kent State University by the Ohio National Guard — an act which was immediately condemned.

Using rocks found strewn in their streets, Palestinians confronted the Israeli soldiers

and pressed their demands for liberation and independence.

Daily images of a Palestinian child courageously standing in the line of fire of an Israeli soldier while throwing a stone were permanently etched in the American conscience.

The intifada did in many weeks what the "revolution" had failed to do in 20 years.

Americans quickly saw parallels between the intifada and the Biblical confrontation between David, armed only with a slingshot and a stone, and his oppressor, a heavily armed behemoth named Goliath. Suddenly, to many Americans, and people around the world, Israel didn't look so good.

Americans did not like the idea that their taxes were paying for the arms that Israel was using against Palestinian civilians.

But there was one important difference between the images that brought about an end to the Vietnam War, and the images of the intifada which raged on for more than seven years: The anti-war movement had qualified leaders. The Palestinians in the United States did not.

In fact, it is the failure of Arab and Palestinian Americans to organise themselves in support of the intifada that kept this movement from achieving more than it did.

The Arab American community was disorganised, divided and represented mainly by shortsighted textbook-carrying academics who had little understanding of the American political process, public opinion or professional methods of influencing the media.

While the intifada succeeded in destroying Israel's once "heroic" image in the United States and in other countries, the failure of Arab Americans to support the intifada allowed Israel to counter the damage.

Those who commemorate the successes of the intifada should not forget the shortfalls that prevented it from winning ultimate Palestinian independence.

The writer is a Palestinian American writer. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Signals from Tehran and others

By Saeed Barzin

READING — Despite criticisms at home and abroad that President Khatami has achieved little after three months in office, the foreign ministry in Tehran is in upbeat mood after achieving a double success. On Nov. 13, European Union ambassadors returned to Tehran under terms acceptable to the regime a few days after Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi had consolidated a new climate of détente in the Gulf that was almost unimaginable this time last year.

The seven-month dispute with the European Union (EU) over the return of its ambassadors came to an end after a compromise over protocol. The ambassadors had left Tehran earlier this year after a German court implicated the Iranian government in the assassination of dissidents in a Berlin café five years ago. Iran said that it would accept the return of the ambassadors only if the German envoy returned last. The compromise reached this month met Iran's demand on protocol while the EU feels that it has made it clear that it will respond to acts of terrorism on its soil.

The U.S. administration and the State Department have not reacted negatively to the EU move. "Each country must make decisions about its own diplomatic representation. We

have always regarded this as an issue between the EU and Iran," a State Department spokesman said in Washington. Because of these developments, it seems more than ever possible that although there is little chance of an official change in U.S. foreign policy, the sanctions against Iran will be abandoned to all intents and purposes.

Foreign Minister Kharrazi's week-long tour of the Arab states of the Gulf last month brought about the hope that a new chapter in Iran's relations with its Arab neighbours was about to begin. His efforts were geared towards ending the years of tension that has bedevilled relations and guaranteeing that Gulf leaders attend the Organisation of the Islamic Conference summit in Tehran which starts today. Kharrazi said that the trip was a new stride towards unity and that a new and positive atmosphere now prevailed in the region. Both sides had the political will to promote relations, he said.

On the most important leg of his tour Kharrazi visited Saudi Arabia where he met his counterpart Crown Prince Abdullah. Kharrazi told the crown prince that stability could serve as a basis for economic cooperation between the two countries and that there could be greater understanding on Islamic issues which have been a point of contention between the two

Gulf powers. "As an important state in the region, Saudi Arabia could cooperate with Iran in order to play a significant role in promoting Islamic solidarity," he said.

The clearest message about the trip came from the Iran Radio commentator who termed the visit a "turning point" in relations. "Riyadh is interested in introducing fundamental revisions in so far as ties with Iran are concerned. Such a realistic view is a response to the attempts by Iran to extend cooperation and reinforce friendship between the Arab states and the Islamic republic."

As a medium-term objective Iran seeks cooperation from Saudi Arabia on oil production policy. In turn, the Saudis want a reduction in Iranian propaganda against them and an end to the support provided by the Iranians for Saudi dissidents.

The mood has been so upbeat that even the UAE, which has territorial disputes with Iran, has moved forward. Defence Minister Mohammad Al Maktum said the dispute between the two countries should be settled by "dialogue and understanding without convulsions and exaggerated statements." Iran is a neighbouring country with a regional political and economic weight that cannot be ignored or antagonised, he added.

Middle East International

LETTERS

On humanitarian grounds

To the Editor:

I AM writing to express thanks to the Jordan Times for a bold, outspoken editorial on the "U.N.-Iraq crisis" (Nov. 27). The Iraqi leadership, however short-sighted and self-destructive it was in 1990, now needs and deserves a break on humanitarian grounds. It is time to speak out and say enough is enough. Your editorial gives expression to the feelings of Muslims the world over, and of a large segment of world opinion.

The current scene of "U.S. judging the affair" must change to a rational and impartial view by the U.N. Security Council and the world. U.S. opinion shouldn't be allowed to dominate, blinding all logical and humanitarian considerations.

If defaulters of U.N. resolutions deserved similar treatment for violating U.N. resolutions, would not the children and people be starving today in Israel, America and India for violation of U.N. decisions and for excessive brutalities in the Middle East, Vietnam and Kashmir? Don't the forests in Vietnam and homes and valleys in Arab lands and Kashmir still hold scars of chemical warfare and destruction?

Isn't it time good sense prevails at the U.N. and in the Western world? And in the Muslim World, too. After all, even the most powerful empires had a fall. The history of human civilisation proves this beyond doubt.

Dr. Masud Ahmad Malik
 Sweileh, Jordan

Middle East countries resist landmines ban

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The stalled Middle East peace process is discouraging many Arab states from joining an international ban on Anti-Personnel (AP) landmines, officials and observers said on Monday.

Tunisia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Yemen were the only Arab countries among the 121 states at the December 2-4 meeting in Canada that signed the convention banning landmines. The convention commits states to a comprehensive global ban on the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of mines.

"The treaty has to be balanced off with national security interests, paying particular attention to neighbouring countries," Dr. Ma'ruf Bakhit, vice president for Military Affairs at Mu'ta University, told the Jordan Times.

Arab countries, many of them still at a state of war with Israel — like Syria and Lebanon — do not want to join the ban as long as the Jewish state has such mines in stock and continues to use them. Even Jordan and Egypt, which have signed peace treaties with Israel, are reluctant to do so.

But officials and diplomats say most states, even the Arab ones, in principle respected the humanitarian aspects of the convention.

Of the 188 states eligible to ratify, three permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — the United States, Russia and China — have yet to sign.

Official and independent estimates have put the number of landmines planted in the Middle East at over 54 million — averaging 45 per cent of the global landmine arsenal.

According to Jordanian military officials, the Kingdom suffers the potential peril of 280,000 AP-mines planted mainly along the border with Israel during its 46-year state of war with the Jewish state.

Jordan also has some landmines planted on the border with Syria, which also says it will not join the ban as long as neighbouring countries continue to use them.

Lebanon, part of its southern borders still occupied by Israel, shares the same sentiment. Two children were killed from landmines last Friday in Lebanon.

Egypt, with 32 million mines, is eager to gain technical support to demine territories in a process expected to cost \$200 million. It is seeking financial compensation and technical help from countries who were responsible for planting them during World War II.

Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt, who have been parties to the Ottawa process, have signalled willingness to sign the treaty. But they want the convention to be amended to take into consideration their security concerns.

The treaty comes into force once 40 countries have ratified it. Signatory states are given a time frame of four years to destroy stockpiles and 10 years to clear AP-mines.

Kuwait has spent around \$800 each on clearing the 1.8 million AP-mines planted during the 1990-91 Gulf War with Iraq. Up to 1,700 civilians have died, and 2,300 have been injured in the Gulf Arab emirate since then.

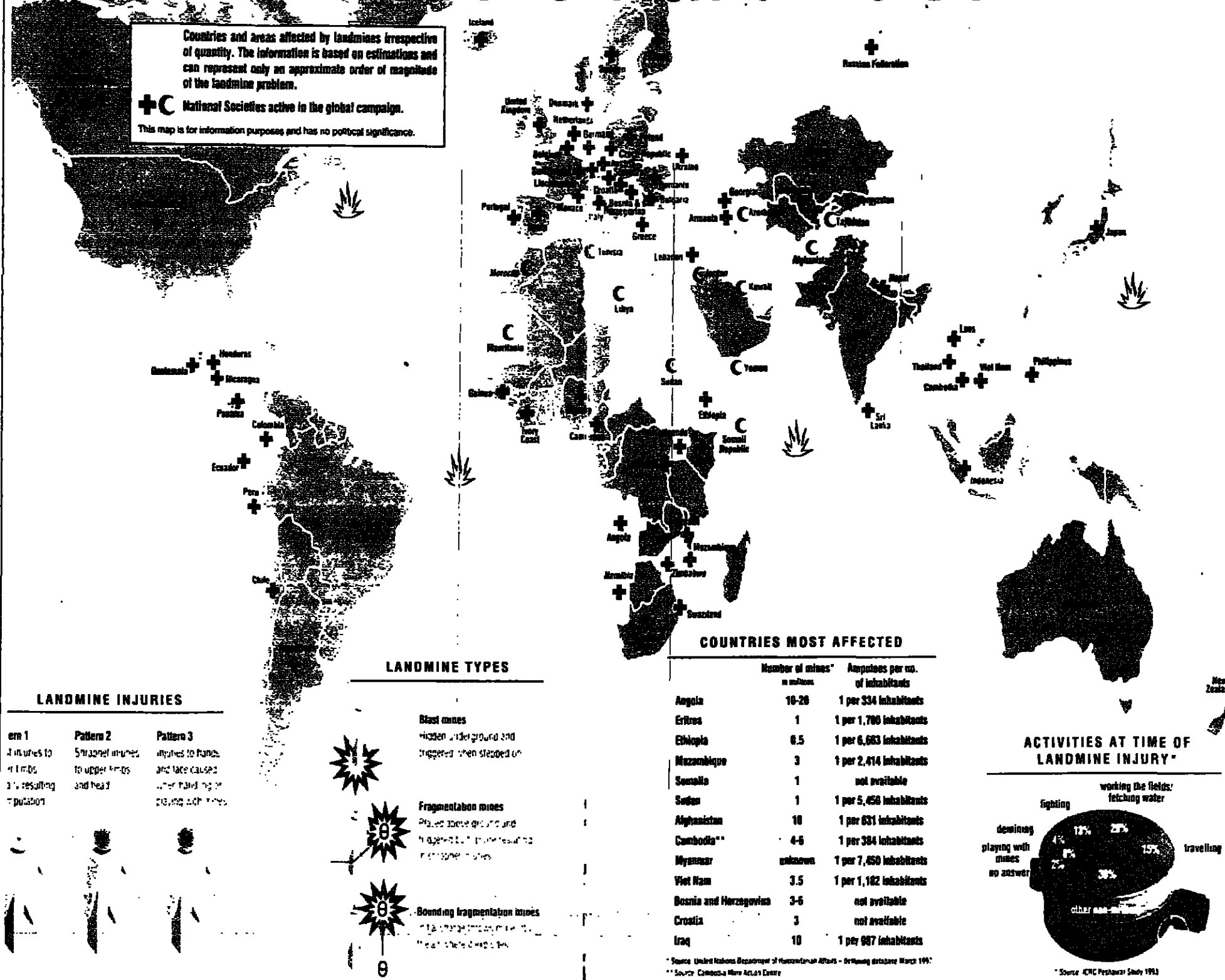
The West Bank and the Gaza Strip have also suffered from mines left by Turkish occupiers under Ottoman rule.

Gaza and parts of the West Bank which returned to Palestinians under a 1993 peace deal, were used by Israel as training areas for mine deployment, reports say.

According to a survey between 1988 and 1995, 100 people, mainly children, were hurt by mines.

"Fields had not been cleared and no maps were given, so many people, especially children, have been killed or maimed," said a Palestinian official.

Landmines: the Hard Facts



Luxorites suffer the aftermath of massacre

(Continued from page 12)

tourism official had reiterated in Cairo. "The unfortunate attack at the temple was an isolated incident which could happen anywhere and we are sure the situation will be back to normal soon."

"But what are we all going to do in the meantime?" Mr. Abdul Aziz, the taxi driver, gestures at the hundreds of young men idly sitting around in the sidewalk cafes in Luxor. These youths, he explained, should have been working in the dozens of small factories which produce clay pottery, papyrus, and other souvenirs for tourists.

"There is no one to buy and the stores are overstocked," adds Mr. Abdul Aziz. "So why produce more?"

It is only natural that terrorism drives away tourists, I try to tell him. "But we in Luxor are peace-loving people," he argues. "There is no life in Luxor without tourists. Everyone here depends on tourism to make a living and none of us would even think of raising a finger against tourists."

To prove his point, Mr. Abdul Aziz makes a startling revelation: It was actually the villagers

who chased and blocked the hijacked bus that carried the six gunmen after the massacre at the temple, forcing the assailants to abandon the vehicle and flee.

"By the time police arrived, at least two of the terrorists were killed by the enraged villagers," says Mr. Abdul Aziz, adding a new element to the episode [this was subsequently dismissed as untrue by senior officials in Cairo who reiterated that all the six were killed by police bullets]. But Mr. Abdul Aziz's one argument sticks — "none of the six was from Luxor." "They used the mountain tracks, covering perhaps 200 to 300 kilometres, to reach the temple," he adds. "They would not have been let through had they used the regular roads or through any other route. The villagers would have spotted them as strangers and reported them to police."

However, Mr. Abdul Aziz is bitter that there were only two guards at the temple gates. "They were mowed down in a minute and there was no other security official in sight to summon help," he says. "How was such a thing allowed to happen?"

At the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, the flow of tourists has

trickled to a few dozens compared with the thousands who used to flock there before the massacre. Only the lower floor of the impressive stone structure is now open for tourists. "No entry, Renovation Under Way," says a sign blocking entry to the second stage, where most of the killings took place, with the gunmen going on a systematic rampage from room to room searching for tourists.

"I guess they are still cleaning up the place and removing the tell-tale signs of the massacre — the bullet marks and bloodstains," says a German visitor, obviously bitter that he was not allowed beyond the lower stage. Most of the visitors these days are Egyptian schoolchildren, brought in on state-paid trips and trained to say "hello" to every foreigner in an obvious attempt to allay fears of terrorism at tourism sites. "But they don't need me," laments Egyptian tour guide Raafat Mahmoud as he sips coffee at the security post down the road. "I have no work until Sunday when a French group is due," he adds in a heavy Egyptian-French accent. "That group was supposed to be off at least 60, but now I'm told to expect 20."

Among the other Muslim leaders who arrived Monday are Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed was the only woman leader to arrive — dressed in the Islamic covering

Prince expected to press for zakat fund

(Continued from page 1)

support for radical Islamists in the Arab World, a charge that Iran denies.

For that Arab delegates are paying special attention to the wording of the summit resolution on terrorism.

According to one Jordanian official, Amman "welcomes the summit's intention to discuss terrorism, which for a long time has incorrectly and unjustifiably been associated with Islam."

Three thousand people

from the city of Luxor in Egypt, the scene of a massacre of foreign tourists last month, cabled the summit on Monday and demanded that it "devise a strategy to end terrorism." IRNA reported yesterday.

The former Iranian foreign minister, Ali Akbar Velayati, in an article that appeared in Resalat newspaper called on the OIC to "better introduce our Islamic identity and values to the world."

This view, expressed by Mr. Velayati, is increasingly

being heard in Tehran, which is keen on the success of the conference that is being held under the theme: "Dignity, Dialogue and Participation."

Prince Hassan's delegation includes Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai, Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abadi and Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Hani Mulki.

Iran welcomes Muslim leaders for summit

(Continued from page 1)

An echo of past tension was evident at the airport where a brief scuffle erupted between Mr. Arafa's bodyguards and Iranian security forces, with the Palestinian minders trading punches with Revolutionary Guards (see story on page 2).

The leaders of Turkey, Qatar, Senegal, Tajikistan, Lebanon, Mozambique, Azerbaijan and the Maldives also arrived here Monday, along with the prime ministers of Morocco and Bangladesh.

Among the other Muslim leaders who arrived Monday are Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed was the only woman leader to arrive — dressed in the Islamic covering

mandatory in the Islamic Republic.

While most guests were taken away in a locally assembled stretch limousine, oil-rich Gulf Arab leaders were accommodated with Mercedes.

Prompted by a diplomatic row with Germany, Iran decided against importing new German cars and opted for assembling around 100 special Peugeot limousines, summit organiser Sadeq Kharazi said Monday.

"It may not be up to the fanciest international standards, but it will do the work by our humble standards," he said.

Iranian officials said all 55 OIC members would be represented at senior level, with at least 20 heads of state.

The conference will be opened with a speech from Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, his first international stage since taking

power in 1989, followed by words from U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

OIC foreign ministers have approved a record 142 resolutions to put to the summit.

The collapse of the Middle East peace process under Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has forged Islamic unity, with both enemies of and partners in the process signing up to a host of resolutions condemning the Jewish state.

Other hot political issues such as the ongoing war in Afghanistan, violence in Kashmir, and the fragile situation in Bosnia are also the subject of resolutions.

An Islamic charter of human rights, the need for an Islamic common market, the promotion of women's and children's rights, and the need for greater cultural and economic cooperation are also on the agenda.

King honours all who made Dar Al Bir project successful

(Continued from page 1)

good physical shape," the King said in the ceremony attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor, Her Royal Highness Princess Zein and other officials.

Expressing appreciation of the good work of the employees at Dar Al Bir, the King said: "I am indebted to all of you because your achievement has given me further impetus and a new strength and confidence which is even stronger now in our endeavour to achieve what is best for our people and our nation."

"Queen Noor and I deeply thank you for your work and hope and expect that you will continue your efforts to build on a solid ground and to serve the nation. It is hoped the

whole Jordanian society will concentrate its efforts to focus attention on all weak points in a frank and courageous manner so that we can transcend the (shame complex) and candidly discuss various matters in order to deal with imbalances as this is the only way to attain our objectives. This requires that every one must be committed to his actions and behaviour and his sense of responsibility."

On Dec. 3, the King and the Queen inspected the renovations of the new orphanage, which is now called Dar Al Bir, and spent some time with the children and their nannies.

Half of world's refugees come from Islamic countries — U.N.

(Continued from page 1)

"The idea is good, and we urge that it be supported," Mr. Boukry told a news conference, which coincided with the release in Geneva of the UNHCR's annual report.

In recent weeks, the UNHCR has launched a publicity campaign in Arabic-language newspapers seeking aid for Muslim refugees.

Mr. Boukry estimated that more than half of the world's refugees have come from Islamic countries, especially Afghanistan.

An Arabic-language version of the report published in Cairo said that the Arab countries were among those taking in large numbers of refugees, mainly from Africa.

Among Arab countries, Iraq has the largest number of refugees abroad, reflecting domestic turbulence and hardship caused by U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

With hardliners expected to take over IAF, party's relations with regime may face increased tensions

(Continued from page 1)

Several officials and analysts said the struggle between the old guard, that has coexisted peacefully with the regime for years, and the young angry grassroots could lead to the creation of a second more moderate Islamic party.

While some analysts fear these complications could radicalise the movement, many IAF leaders have ruled out the possibility of militancy and a cut in the channel of communication with the regime, which backed them in the

1990s to counter the influence of leftists and other political groups.

"The history of the Islamic movement in this country is well known to everybody," IAF Executive Committee member Abdul Laif Arabiyat told the Jordan Times. Dr. Arabiyat, tipped as the likely candidate to become the IAF's new secretary general, was referring to decades of peaceful coexistence with the regime.

"We have faced problems, but we never allowed any of our members to use other than legal

and peaceful means (to voice their opposition against government policies)," Dr. Arabiyat explained.

"Dialogue with the government will never stop," he added.

The new Shura Council will elect the 17-member IAF executive committee and the secretary general in its first meeting, set for Dec. 25, according to the party's statute.

Outgoing IAF Secretary General Ishaq Farhan, in office for two consecutive terms, is not eligible to retain his post, according

to internal regulations. Observers and analysts said a recent redistribution of seats among the 22 electoral districts, has tipped the balance in favour of the hardliners.

According to directives issued by the IAF executive committee two weeks ago, the number of seats allocated to each district was readjusted according to changes in the number of members.

The poor and densely-populated areas of Sahab and southern Amman, home too many Pales-

tinian refugees, had their representation increased from two to four, and from two to three seats, respectively.

The Madaba district, which had seven seats, was granted 11 representatives, while Jerash got seven, up from three.

The more affluent districts in the capital, on the other hand, saw their representation decrease.

The seats allocated to Amman's First District were reduced from six to four, while Amman's Third District's representation was halved to four

seats.

"The redistribution of seats was necessary in order to guarantee that the new Shura Council reflected the composition of the party's base," said an IAF source. However, he admitted that the move will "harm the moderates."

Tensions between the Islamists and the government began brewing before Jordan signed the treaty with the Jewish state, their avowed enemy.

The Islamists boycotted last month's general elections to protest against the one-person,

one-vote electoral system, press restrictions introduced in May, and Parliament's diminishing role in politics.

They have seen their representation decrease in successive elections since Jordan resumed its democratic march, after the 1989 riots.

In the 1989 elections, they won 22 of the 80 seats in the Lower House, while in 1993 they only clinched 16 seats.

They were unable to block the passage of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in Parliament.

Planning minister: Investment in information technology has become one of the foundations for economic prosperity

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Possession and dissemination of information via Cyberspace has become vital for economic and social development in today's global village, participants at a national seminar said Monday.

Delegates at the National Conference on Cyber Economy said the issue involved a combination of information and telecommunication technologies to help increase productivity, quality and efficiency of banking, business management, administration, education and health care services.

They said a cyber economy was an information economy where a combination of the two technologies allowed greater mobility and flexibility in capital and financial movements and trans-border data exchanges.

Planning Minister Rima Khalaf told the seminar that the system of informatics had in the last decades become the most important aspect for achieving productivity and competitiveness as world economies moved closer.

Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince

Hassan, Dr. Khalaf said: "The availability of information and the way it is conveyed has changed the methods of administration, management and marketing. Branches of institutions could be directly linked despite their distant locations."

Institutions could also communicate with the consumer, the market and sell their products and services directly through the computer and other modern electronic means of telecommunication, Dr. Khalaf added.

She said national and international institutions have grown to perceive knowledge and information as a basic necessity, noting that companies in developed countries rely on what they called "knowledge workers" in marketing and production operations.

It is evident, Dr. Khalaf said, that investment in the Information Technology (IT) has become one of the foundations for economic prosperity be it on the micro or macro levels.

However, she added, to encourage investments that would help any country benefit from IT, the necessary infrastructure should be strengthened in order to

receive and provide information through modern telecommunications.

Dr. Khalaf called for "the establishment of national strategies that would set Jordan's priorities to achieve comprehensive development in this age of electronics."

Although IT industry in Jordan has grown over the years, it is primarily exclusive to educated and wealthy groups in the society.

Jorgen Lissner, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative in Jordan, warned against separating those who have easy access to advanced know-how from those who do not.

"Such an approach could easily deepen the socio-economic disparities in the country and harm many ongoing efforts to promote social integration," Mr. Lissner told the seminar which was organized by the National Information Centre (NIC) with UNDP funding.

He said: "The alternative is obvious and perfectly feasible in Jordan. Modern electronic technologies can and must be put to good use and mobilised in a concerted fashion in the struggle against poverty and growing

socio-economic disparities."

He noted that obstacles posed by remote areas are surmounted by all kinds of state of the art solutions such as distance learning by radio and the new opportunities granted to farming communities through new water management methods, new veterinary vaccines, disease-resistant seed varieties and more reliable long-term weather forecasts.

Mr. Lissner concluded by reiterating his caution against "depriving our low-income brothers and sisters of the chance to benefit from technological advances."

In his address to the opening session, NIC Director Yusuf Nusseir said Jordan has started to build its own national information system. He added that however, the national strategies drawn by Jordan should try to confront the challenges posed by economic and social variables brought about by the information revolution.

The ultimate objective of the cyber-economy programme is to create an Arab workforce that can function and benefit from opportunities created by the cyber-

economy.

According to a UNDP statement, this would mean raising the standards of training and education in Arab countries, allowing information technology to permeate all sectors of Arab economy and society, and providing high-quality telecommunication services.

In their working papers, participants said Jordan has witnessed a lot of changes which contributed to the information society. According to one of the working papers, these changes include market liberalisation, privatisation of the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation (JTC), licensing new operators, building infrastructure, emergence of computer hardware and software companies in addition to the introduction of appropriate governmental policies and regulations.

"These changes coupled with building the necessary skilled staff will facilitate the incorporation of Jordan as part of the global information society," it said.

The paper stated that in recent years, Jordan has witnessed high growth in the use of IT in many key factors such as the reduction in

IT components cost, introduction of Internet services, presence of IT infrastructure and market liberalisation.

In addition, it said, computer literacy among the Jordanian business community has made investment decisions easier in the IT sector.

A paper on Jordan's national information policy and strategy framework stressed the importance for the government and the private sector to contribute to the process of developing urgently needed information services.

It also urged the government to improve its record as supplier of reliable information and as advisor to the different sectors of the economy.

The paper also called on government departments to coordinate in order to avoid duplications and discrepancies in supplied information.

The seminar, which brought together government officials, the private sector and research institutions, will conclude today with discussions on standardisation in IT, intellectual property rights as well as the international competitiveness and Jordan's economy.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Your plans could run into a roadblock late tonight. Get around it by taking an older person's advice. You may have to do what that person wants, but that's all right. This person may actually know something you don't. Mitigate your enthusiasm a bit and you'll both wind up more successful.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have a great deal of perseverance. A lot of people who have trouble making decisions come to you for advice. That could be happening today. Amazingly, they probably won't take the advice you give them. Don't worry or take any of it too seriously. Be patient.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A meeting should go very well this morning. The best course of action is one you've taken before. Put in a few revisions to streamline the procedure. Call it quits early tonight. More complications arise later, but you can avoid them by being asleep at the time.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Stay off the caffeine again today. Your nerves are taut enough without it. Actually, you're doing a wonderful job. That's why your workload is increasing. It's also why everybody seems to be watching you. Not to fret. You look marvellous!

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Fun and games are the order of the day. You're lucky in more ways than one. A surprise in your romantic relationship helps you achieve a goal set long ago. Travel plans fall together this morning. There's a breakdown in the afternoon, as work interferes with your social life. Not to worry. Dinner looks clear. Don't stay up late, though. You've got a busy day tomorrow.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Watch out for an argument with your sweetheart today. Don't get to talking about money. It looks like you're the one who has the anxiety on the subject. If you can postpone this discussion until tomorrow, you'll be better off.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) An older person will be telling you what to do again today. You tend to listen politely, with a smile on your lips. The information goes in one ear and right out the other, however. Instead of doing that today, actually listen. You may hear something that will help you achieve your dreams.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) There's a lot going on to work that you don't like. You don't agree with the methods being used. You prefer to do business with a much more calm and cool demeanor. That's going to be hard to maintain today. There's simply too much going on. Just do what you can.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Tidy up things that didn't get finished yesterday. Then call that person you've meaning to get to know better. Set up a date for lunch. But don't have the lunch hour go long. You're still being watched, and each minute counts. Get back in time to crank out the work so you'll cinch that big bonus you're after.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) It looks like a person you live with is pushing you to try something new. Go along with the suggestion, and a whole new you need to do something frivolous. That's an order.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You're thinking about ways to save. It's not something that comes naturally. You have to work at it. But now that you know that's the homework, you won't have any problem with it. If that's how you look at your Christmas shopping, you'll have a better time of it. Make that your objective tonight.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) There's money coming in today. Hold on to it. One of your assignments right now is to practice financial self-discipline. See if you can save more than you spend. This may be frustrating, but it'll work out for the best.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

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The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman Supply Department, until 2:00 p.m. local time Wednesday, 31st December 1997. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD25 for each set of tender documents.
The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours local time Saturday, 10th January, 1998.

Sameh Madani
Managing Director

G-10 sees no big risk to global economy

BASLE, Switzerland (R) — Bundesbank President Hans Tietmeyer said Monday the Group of 10 (G-10) central bankers saw no big risk to the global economy but noted there was some possibility of a slowdown and hoped Japan would boost growth.

Mr. Tietmeyer, chairman of the G-10 central bank governors' committee, also said inflation

and exchange rates did not pose any concern at the moment for the central bankers.

"We feel that there is not a big risk for further world growth. Some slowing is possible, but there's not a big risk up until now," Mr. Tietmeyer told reporters after a regular monthly committee meeting at the Bank for International Settlements. He was speaking after the

International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Friday lowered its forecast for 1998 global economic growth to 3.5 per cent from 4.3 per cent because of financial turmoil in Asia.

Mr. Tietmeyer said the central bankers hoped Japan, the most exposed country in the world to the Asian crisis, would take steps to stimulate growth before the year was out.

Toshihiko Fukui, senior deputy governor of the Bank of Japan, had told the G-10 governors Japan would take steps to address problems in Japan's financial sector and also "create conditions for new growth". Mr. Tietmeyer said.

"We hope decisions will be taken before Christmas" on Dec. 25, Mr. Tietmeyer said.

G-10 officials held a first round of discussions on the lessons to be learned from financial turbulence in Asia, Mr. Tietmeyer said, adding these discussions would continue with the International Monetary Fund. "There are clearly lessons to be learned that appropriate banking supervision of financial institutions has to be strengthened, no doubt about that," he said.

The discussions would also revolve around the appropriate policy for avoiding crises in the future, he added.

Turning to the global economic outlook, Mr. Tietmeyer said the G-10 expected a pick up in demand in continental Europe but reiterated that many European countries must still overcome structural problems, especially unemployment.

U.S. and Anglo-Saxon economies seemed to be continuing to grow, he said.

Mr. Tietmeyer said central bankers had to remain vigilant and countries with external imbalances had to address their problems. "All in all, in the area of inflation and exchange rates there does not seem to be a special concern for the time being," he said. "But of course monetary policy authorities have to be vigilant," he added.

Mr. Tietmeyer did not comment on monetary policy in any specific country, but added some countries would be deciding on monetary targets in the next week. "What is important is that countries with external imbalances have to address their fundamental problems," Mr. Tietmeyer said.

For the first time Revlon presents famous Arab fashion model — Salma Hayek

SALMA HAYEK, a Mexican actress of Arab origin, has joined the Revlon fashion models, according to the Revlon company board chairman.

He said that Salma Hayek will join Cindy Crawford and the famous actress Melani Griffith.

She will first present an advertisement for new nail polish "Top Speed Nail Enamel" which is a one layer varnish that dries within seconds. Ms. Hayek will be associated with the product being one of the most attractive and talented actresses.

On her joining the Revlon team, Ms. Hayek said: "I love Revlon products and I highly appreciate the fact that their products serve all women. I like to join such a company that gives due attention to women."

Revlon is a pioneer company in the field of cosmetics, skin care products and perfumes.

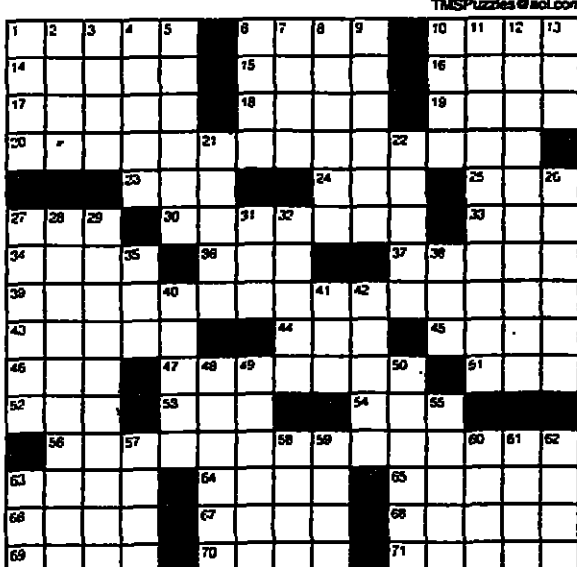
The company's policy is to introduce the latest products of high quality with reasonable prices.

Revlon products in Jordan can be found at the Kingdom's sole Revlon agent — Abu Shagra Establishment.

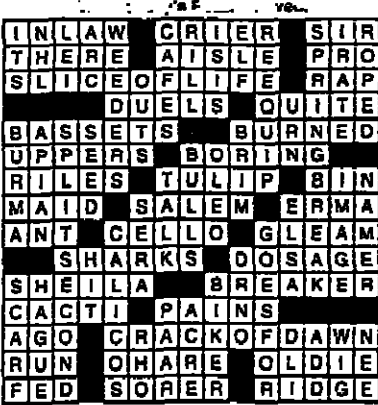
THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- 1 Tic
- 6 Lofly
- 10 Phil, the folk singer
- 14 Czech tennis player Sukova
- 15 Arden, casually
- 16 Stable leopard
- 17 Played again
- 18 Howard and Wood
- 19 Take care of pressing problems
- 20 Start of a quip
- 21 For instance
- 22 Post-dusk
- 23 Chicago hrs.
- 27 Quaff at the Queen's Head
- 30 Blows a gasket
- 33 "The Naked"
- 34 Drops
- 36 Real profit
- 37 Absolute
- 38 Second part of the quip
- 43 Language of Shiraz
- 44 Wordless yes
- 45 Paid players
- 46 End of command?
- 47 Cooling surface
- 51 Sted letters
- 52 Hosp. employees
- 53 Harrison in "Star Wars"
- 54 Le Gallienne or Salvor
- 55 End of the quip
- 63 Teheran currency
- 64 Put aside
- 65 Manah of music
- 66 Corridor
- 67 Champagne chiller
- 68 Track official
- 69 Exclusively
- 70 Plane-crash investigation grp.
- 71 Donahue movie, "Susan"

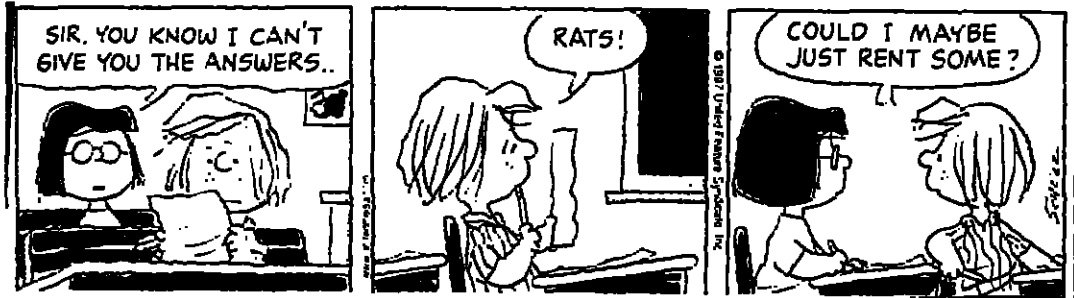


By Betty Jorgensen
Lake Oswego, OR



- 5 Some rays
- 6 Actress Garr
- 7 Staffer's river
- 8 Connection point
- 9 Renter
- 10 Leave out
- 11 Ludicrously exaggerated portrait
- 12 E.D.S. founder
- 13 DC VIP
- 21 Serengeti predator
- 22 Kashmir river
- 26 Actress Wright
- 27 Pater
- 28 Canadian mountain range
- 29 Classic TV attorney
- 31 Common Market abbr.
- 32 Trees in a group
- 35 Clemente
- 38 Recipe meas.
- 40 Dark period
- 41 Director
- 42 Like non-working factories
- 48 "A..." in the Sun
- 49 Unaltered
- 50 Puts out on the street
- 55 Effective use
- 57 Comrade in arms
- 58 James Merritt or Charles Edward
- 59 Croak's neighbor
- 60 Macleane film, "la Douce"
- 61 Poverty
- 62 Jane
- 63 Pi follower

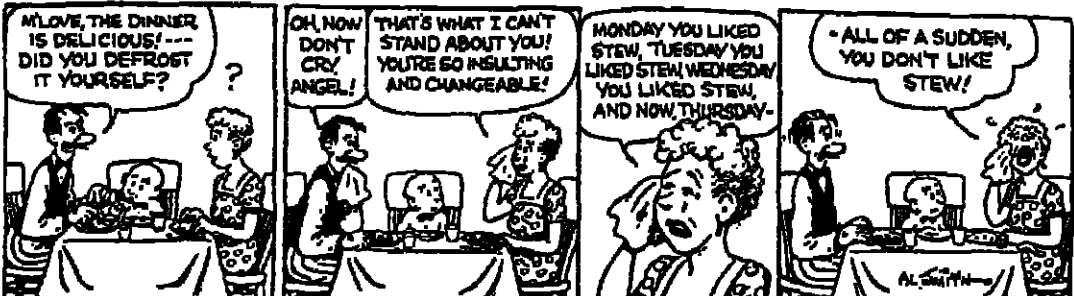
Peanuts



Andy Capp



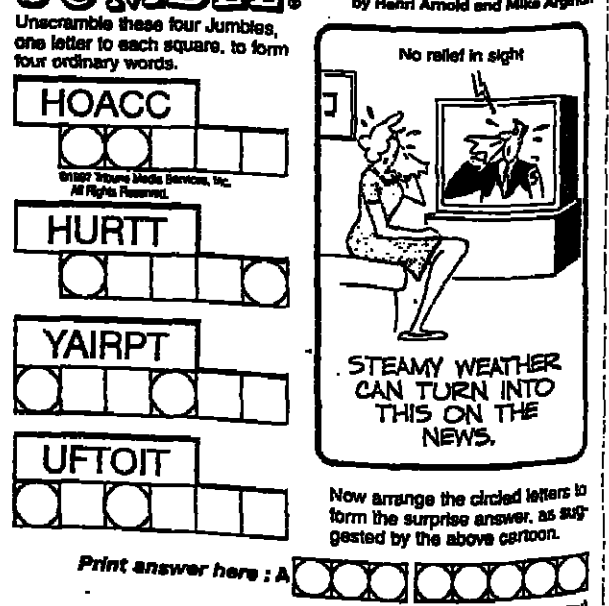
Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Investments should be export-oriented — Ghoul

AMMAN — The director of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) office at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the small size of the Jordanian market does not encourage industrial investment for local consumption. "The alternative solution is to direct investment to production for export," she said noting that the government's economic policy since the early 90s has been directed towards that goal.

"In this regard, work has been carried out to improve the investment climate and openness as well as to free trade and facilitate procedures because the membership in the WTO provides huge markets for exports without differentiation in treatment," Ms. Ghoul added. She indicated that this situation provides huge opportunities for joint investment which, as a result, would minimise unemployment and boost the activating the production process.

Ms. Ghoul said foreign investments bring along new production methods and help in technology transfer and its advancement especially if there was a good intellectual property rights protection, which is one of the most important WTO agreements.

She indicated that openness encourages competition and that leads to industries moving to develop and improve their products. "By not joining (the WTO) means isolationism and underdevelopment and difficulty in entering other markets," the director said. "Besides, other countries can take protection measures against us and we will not be able to respond."

Ms. Ghoul explained that by being a WTO member, Jordan can sue violating countries and, if need be, we can take protectionist measures to prevent damaging our industries and ensure fair competition.

The director indicated that joining the WTO does not mean cancelling customs tariffs but rather fixing it at a certain level equal to that imposed on locally-manufactured products. The government will have the right to levy taxes and fees as it sees fit as well as to take protection measures against any dumping policies.

She emphasised that joining the WTO will improve export opportunities, raise economic activity and improve the income and livelihood of the people in the medium- and long-term. "The current of globalisation, free trade and open economies on each other is hard to stand against," Ms. Ghoul said. "The revolution in communications and information technology has made the world a small village that has no frontiers."

However, Ms. Ghoul cautioned that such openness carries risks if no controls are put in place to regulate dealings between the people and various economies. She noted that the WTO is the international organisation through which controls were designed "to enable the small economy sue the large economy if the latter has caused any injustice or tried to exploit the small economy in any way."

Jordan's debut GDR oversubscribed — advisor

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — The Global Depository Receipt (GDR) issued by Arab Potash Company — the first by a Jordanian company — has been oversubscribed mainly on demand from Europe.

"It's been comfortably oversubscribed and has drawn, as expected, healthy demand from European investors," Omar Masri, head of Amman-based Atlas Investment Group (AIG), the local advisor to the issue's lead manager, Nomura International said.

Final figures have not yet been released.

The GDR was listed on the London Stock Exchange on

Monday and will be traded on the SEAQ International as of Tuesday, Mr. Masri said.

The deal was priced at JD6.4 (\$9.03) per GDR, close to the current price of the share on the Amman Financial Market (AFM), but not at a premium.

The issue will raise around \$33 million to help finance projects to raise potash capacity to 2.2 million tonnes a year by 2002 from 1.8 million tonnes now as part of plans to exploit the resources of the Dead Sea minerals.

The offering, which was launched last November in Tokyo, has placed a total of 3.62 million shares with global investors, part of unsubscribed shares from an earlier public issue.

The success of Jordan's first GDR should help attract foreign fund buying in the AFM after a landmark decision last September removed a 50 per cent foreign ownership ceiling on most listed stock, bankers say.

In light of the precarious market conditions that have prevailed recently, Jordan's first international equity offering was a considerable achievement by the issuer and lead manager, investment analysts said.

A series of roadshows to promote the global launch of the offer, which covered Australia, Europe and the United States attracted a high level of interest in both the firm and Jordan.

"The high level of interest

reflects the pent up demand for quality bluechip Jordanian companies," Mr. Masri said.

The issue has attracted emerging market funds that have targeted the Jordanian market, but have been shut out from several bluechips due to a shortage of stock.

Nomura went ahead with the launch of the issue as scheduled, despite the recent upheaval in Asian financial markets. The Asian crisis had limited fallout on Middle Eastern equities markets in contrast to fixed income securities, which were hit hard, analysts say.

It will also encourage other bluechip firms to tap capital markets and the offering could be an ideal exposure by global funds to the Jordanian

bourse, bankers say.

Analysts say Arab Potash, a major world producer, has good long-term earnings potential. It leads the world in its field both operationally and on financial performance as it has the lowest unit cost in the industry, which allows it to realise higher gross profit margins.

Arab Potash forecasts current sales of around \$180 million a year to double once future projects to expand its Dead Sea's mineral extraction is completed in the next few years. Jordan has 55.4 per cent holding, while Kuwait, Iraq, Libya and the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank and other Arab governments hold minority stakes in the firm.

Two top Swiss banks to merge to create global giant

ZURICH (AFP) — Union Bank of Switzerland and Swiss Bank Corporation (SBC) have announced on Monday they would merge in a move creating the world's second-biggest bank and the largest fund manager with almost \$600 billion in assets.

But in Brussels, European Union (EU) Competition Commissioner Karel Van Miert said the European Commission would probably have to make an inquiry into the planned merger. "I'm almost sure the commission is going to have to investigate," he said.

If a probe is ordered, the commission's competition staff would consider the compatibility of the plan with EU rules in so far as the new financial giant would operate on European Union territory.

The joint announcement in Zurich, confirming persistent rumours over the weekend of a marriage between Switzerland's first and third largest banks with a 40 per cent share of the Swiss market, said the new bank would be called United Bank of Switzerland and be based in Zurich.

With assets totalling 922 billion Swiss francs (\$592 billion), the new bank will come just after Japan's Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi and its \$696 billion in the global rankings, and will be the largest in Europe — ahead of Deutsche Bank of Germany.

Total market capitalisation will be \$5 billion Swiss francs.

"The partnership enables two strong banking groups to combine their resources to

forge an even stronger financial services concern," the banks said in a joint statement.

The merger will involve shedding almost a quarter of the bank's combined 56,000 workforce, with some 13,000 jobs to be cut over the next three to four years, the statement said.

Some 6,000 of the losses will occur overseas with 1,800 redundancies in Switzerland, the banks said.

UBS chief executive Mathias Cabiellaventa said the job losses "regrettably are unavoidable."

There were fears in London that a large number of jobs would be lost in the City, where SBC's merchant banking arm, SBC Warburg Dillon Read, employs 3,000 people

and UBS employs 2,900.

As the merchant banking arm of the new bank will be centred around Warburg Dillon Read, most job losses are likely to be at UBS, analysts said.

The Swiss franc weakened in London on news of the merger because of fears of the impact of the job losses on the Swiss economy.

The merged bank expects to make cost savings of around three billion to four billion Swiss francs over three to four years through "extensive economies of scale," the banks said.

But in the short-term, the merger will involve heavy restructuring costs of about seven billion Swiss francs, which will see both banks report a "technical loss" for

1997 as the full amount will be taken as a charge against the 1997 accounts.

Analysts generally saw the merger as positive for both banks despite the heavy restructuring costs, and in early Zurich trading UBS bearer shares were 255 Swiss francs higher, up 13.2 per cent at 2.185 francs, while SBC registered shares gained 34.50 francs or 7.7 per cent, to 482.

"It is a very valuable deal for shareholders. The market already shows that. They have ambitious profit targets. They will be much more competitive," said the head of sales at a major private bank in Geneva.

A NatWest securities banking analyst said the new bank has many opportunities in the continuing consolidation of the financial sector, especially following the turmoil in Southeast Asia.

But the lack of a solid position in the United States remains a notable "weakness," the NatWest analyst said.

The banks said in their statement that further expansion in the U.S. market is "a priority" for its investment banking activities, although SBC Chief Executive Marcel Ospel said it is not necessary to buy a U.S. investment bank.

Existing shareholders will be allocated shares in the new bank through a share swap which will leave UBS shareholders with a 60 per cent stake in the new bank and SBC shareholders the remaining 40 per cent.

International ratings agency Fitch IBCA saw the merger as a better deal for SBC than UBS, putting UBS' long-term senior debt on credit watch with negative implications but SBC's long-term senior debt rating on watch with positive implications.

The new bank will consist of four core areas: Private banking, which will be centred in Basel, investment banking through Warburg Dillon Read in London, institutional asset management to be based in Chicago, and consumer and corporate banking centred in Zurich.

The goal is for net profits of around 10-11 billion Swiss francs by 2002 and a return on equity of 15 to 20 per cent.

The merger requires the approval of the Swiss and EU competition authorities.

UBS Chairman Robert Studer said: "We expect all necessary approvals to be forthcoming over the next few months, meaning that the merger could be completed towards the end of May."

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7874	0.6072	1.4520	130.38	1.4220	1749.75	2.0139	5.9790
DE Mark	0.5595	-	0.3394	0.8119	72.56	0.7950	978.88	1.1289	3.3452
GB Sterling	1.5468	2.9463	-	2.3908	215.26	2.3417	2886.21	3.3218	8.8624
CH Franc	0.6887	1.2301	0.4177	-	89.77	0.8793	1205.15	1.3866	4.1172
JP Yen	0.0077	1.3695	0.4648	1.1121	-	1.0888	13.40	154.27	4.5823
CA Dollar	0.7032	1.2389	0.4197	1.0007	1.09	-	1213.85	1.3963	4.1480
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0198	0.3462	0.0828	1343.54	0.8110	-	11.49	3.4131
NL Guilder	0.4965	88.70	0.3012	72.09	64.75	0.7055	868.41	-	2.9690
FR Franc	0.1573	0.2986	0.1013	24.2469	21.79	0.2374	33.63	33.6300	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7050	3.7505	0.3770	3.6400	0.3048	3.6728	1524.00	3.3950
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2898	0.5317	5.1340	0.4289	5.1803	2149.51	4.7884
Saudi Riyal	0.2668	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0813	0.98	406.35	0.9052
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8806	9.9483	-	9.66	0.8095	9.74	4042.44	9.0053
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0837	1.01	418.58	0.9327
Kuwait Dinar	3.2808	2.3260	12.3040	1.2368	11.94	-	12.05	4989.57	0.9327
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	0.1028	0.9911	0.0830	-	414.84	0.9244
Lebanese L1000	0.98	0.4852	2.4610	0.2474	2.3885	0.2000	2.4100	-	2.2277
Egyptian	0.2948	0.2088	1.1047	0.1110	1.0722	0.0888	1.0818	448.90	-

Energy									
Oil	Last	Previous							
Brent	18.09	18.11							
W. Texas	18.06	18.09							
Bonny	18.08	18.11							
Dubai	17.25	17.00							
UL Gas	185.00	184.00							

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY				
SA Riyal	0.2668	0.4768	0.18191	0.38734	34.8117				
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48678	0.16533	0.39552	35.548				
KW Dinar	3.2806	5.8851	1.99203	4.78844	428.268				
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.74393	1.81082	3.85356	346.26				
CY Pound	1.907	3.4081	1.1568	2.7679	248.508				

Currency Deposit Rates (Bids)									
Period	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year				
USD	6.43	5.84	5.84	5.84	5.96				
GBP	7.47	7.53	7.59	7.62	7.62				
JPY	1.00	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35				
DEM	3.63	3.71	3.78	3.85	3.96				
FRF	4.03	4.18	3.73	3.85	3.97				
CHF	1.58	1.67	1.77	1.68	1.91				
ITL	6.10	6.00	6.10	6.10	6.25				

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Buy	Sell							
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1724	1.1783							
DE Mark	0.3968	0.3988							
CH Franc	0.4892	0.4916							
FR Franc	0.1186	0.1192							
JP Yen	0.5451	0.5478							
NL Guilder	0.3523	0.3541							
IT Lira	0.4053	0.4073							

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN JORDANIA

TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 08/12/1997

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRAMS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
346,000	249,000	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	13	7760	2573560	332.00	331.00	1.00-
2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	16	11225	20763	1.87	1.87	0.00
3,600	1,830	BANK OF JORDAN	6.2	0.00	14	210649	420100	1.92	1.96	0.04+
1,190	890	MID. EAST. INV. BK.	70.3	0.00	11	355500	368320	1.05	1.07	0.02+
2,680	2,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.3	6.06	3	3509	9127	2.59	2.61	0.02+
5,300	4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.4	3.77	8	4372	22493	5.15	5.15	-
4,180	1,850	JOR. PHARM. BANK	10.4	4.60	7	39000	34262	1.95	1.96	0.01+
1,050	740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.3	9.59	12	12900	9417	74	73	0.01-
4,050	2,800	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	13.5	3.61	1	250	665	2.80	2.66	0.14-
3,900	3,080	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	24.4	0.00	4	1150	4381	3.75	3.80	0.05+
1,900	870	BEIT AL-KHAL (BITUNA)	5	17.05	2	2000	1760	88	88	-
5,150	2,500	ARAB BANKING CO.	19.0	0.00	6	3180	8357	2.50	2.63	0.13+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 237.22 %CHG: -0.29										
2,020	1,590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.4	7.77	10	5850	11200	1.87	1.93	0.06+
2,350	1,820	JOR. LIFE INSUR.	8.3	4.71	2	2100	4037	1.92	1.93	0.01+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 117.34 %CHG: +0.37										
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PH.	9.4	5.15	20	69000	133858	1.94	1.94	-
1,010	820	REAL ESTATE INV.	12.5	6.67	3	725	650	90	90	-
1,680	1,150	MID. EAST. HOTELS	19.0	0.00	2	300	375	1.25	1.25	-
3,900	2,990	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.7	0.00	2	19000	3730	3.73	3.73	-
1,050	740	JORDAN EXPT. INV.	9	0.00	8	40750	31028	77	78	0.01+
1,100	900	ZARQA EDUCATION	9	0.00	5	9875	9278	93	93	-
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 108.23 %CHG: 0.00										
1,150	930	ATTANQUEB	9	0.00	1	300	345	1.15	1.15	-
4,450	2,010	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.5	3.61	3	600	1830	3.08	3.08	0.03-
11,160	9,200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	8.47	9	1831	19259	10.50	10.50	-
4,700	3,440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.3	4.89	11	3878	15765	4.11	4.09	0.02-
1,670	1,020	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	17.0	5.84	6	1650	2261	1.38	1.37	0.01-
6,000	4,400	DAR AL-KHAYMA TV. INV.	13.3	4.60	7	39000	15747	5.43	5.43	-
3,850	2,220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.5	10.73	2	11000	2583	2.35	2.33	0.02-
690	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.7	0.00	12	11600	5336	46	46	-
1,230	780	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	23.8	0.00	2	2600	2028	78	78	-
770	510	NATIONAL INDUS.	7	0.00	3	790	421	53	53	-
1,410	700	INTERMED. RETRO. CHEM.	12.0	0.00	3	1325	525	42	42	0.01-
890	530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM.	9	0.00	1	200	120	60	60	-
1,670	1,250	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	15.4	5.79	4	279	338	1.25	1.21	0.04-
1,880	850	UNIV. MOD. INDUS.	9	2.25	6	1150	997	85	87	0.02+
1,410	700	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	9.5	14.08	3	2643	70	21	21	0.01-
1,070	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.3	0.00	8	8850	7852	88	89	0.01+
1,330	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.7	0.00	2	2250	2745	1.22	1.22	-
800	500	UNIV. CBL. & VEG.	47.7	0.00	3	1250	4568	1.07	1.05	0.02-
810	730	JORDAN STAL.	33.0	6.85	4	2750	2008	74	73	0.01-
840	570	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.6	16.13	9	3150	1924	62	62	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 117.13 %CHG: -0.19										
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 171.33 %CHG: -0.23										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 08/12/1997										
610	360	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9.6	0.00	7	10500	3780	36	36	-
800	360	UNION INV. 501	g	0.00	20	100000	22000	72	72	-
570	360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	g	0.00	7	5700	2337	41	41	-
720	350	AL-SHARQ TRD. CO.	0.00	9	54000	52920	1.93	1.98	0.05+	
1,890	1,050	CENTURY INV. GROUP	5	0.00	1	495	505	98	98	0.01+
530	310	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	34.6	0.00	4	5750	1753	31	30	0.01-
750	380	KATL. MULT. ENG. HAMMO	g	0.00	11	33600	17375	41	41	-
1,200	890	READY MIX CONCRETE	12.1	0.00	6	6000	6000	1.00	1.00	-
660	380	NORTHEAST PHARM. 751	g	0.00	2	550	204	62	62	-
1,400	860	UNION TOBACCO 752	g	0.00	8	2690	2985	1.36	1.36	-
550	330	REIT PHARM	g	0.00	7	2639	14715	66	65	-
470	290	INDUS. ENG.	g	0.00	12	1500	435	29	29	-
820	490	KATL. POULTRY	g	0.00	18	30150	15283	50	51	0.01+
1,800	660	REIT ALUMINUM 753	92.3	0.00	1	200	84	67	67	-
1,800	770	MODERN FARM 754	8	0.00	1	250	120	77	73	0.04-
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 104 273679 138645										

I : New 12 months high

J : New 12 months low

K : Stock divided during the past 12 months

L : Listed during the past 12 months

M : P/B ratio is 100 or more

Steelers and Chiefs claim NFL playoff berths

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Kordell Stewart threw for three touchdowns and ran for two more, leading the Pittsburgh Steelers over Denver 35-24 and into the National Football League playoffs.

Stewart, nicknamed "Slash" for his equal run and pass prowess, completed 18-of-29 passes for 303 yards and ran 10 times for 49 yards to rally the Steelers from a 21-7 American football deficit here Sunday.

"This was definitely my best game," said Stewart, who missed his career-best passing day by only 14 yards. "I was throwing well throughout the entire game."

Jerome Bettis ran 24 times for 125 yards. "The Bus" took Denver's defense to school and moved within 106 yards of the club record for rushing yards in a season, Barry Foster's 1,690 in 1992.

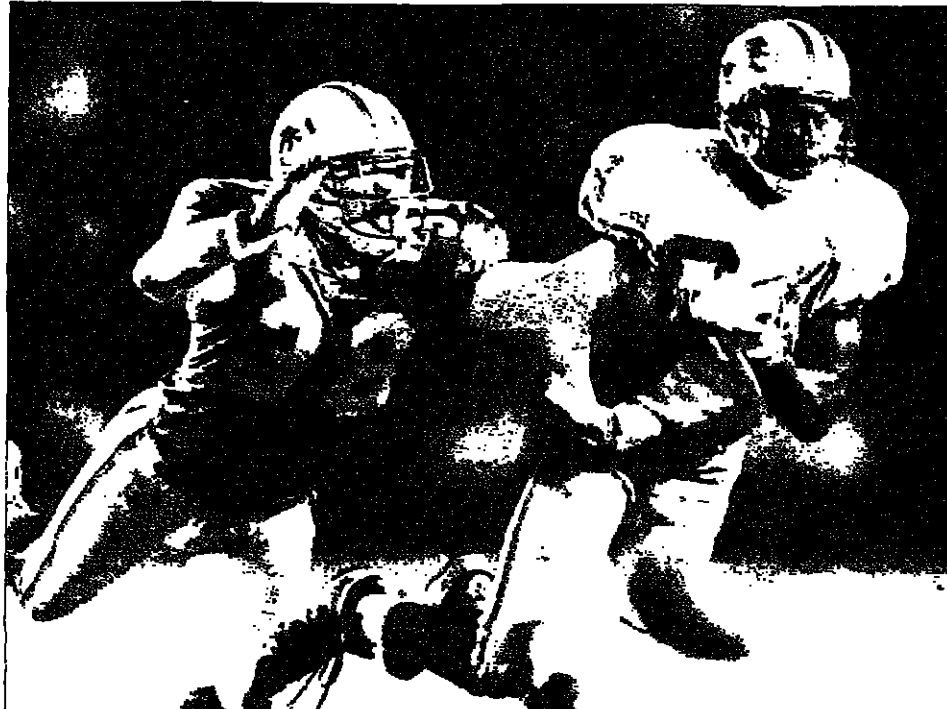
"It was just a matter of taking our time and moving the ball down the field," Stewart said. "We started running the ball better and that's when I started completing passes."

The Steelers, who lost to Dallas in the Super Bowl two seasons ago, were not ensured of a playoff berth until the New York Jets were upset 22-14 at home by Indianapolis, the NFL's doormat with only two triumphs.

Pittsburgh also took sole possession of the AFC Central division lead and a possible first-round bye when Jacksonville lost 26-20 to New England in a rematch of last year's AFC playoff semi-final.

Drew Bledsoe threw for 234 yards and two touchdowns as the Patriots snapped Jacksonville's 13-game home win streak despite the absence of top rusher Curtis Martin and receiver Terry Glenn.

Kansas City also sealed a playoff spot, blanking Oakland 30-0. With Denver's loss, the Chiefs and Denver are both 11-3 to share the AFC West division lead and top honours in a fight for home-field playoff advantage.



Detroit Lions' wide receiver Herman Moore (R) is unable to hold on to a 42-yard Scott Mitchell pass as Miami Dolphins' safety Calvin Jackson applies the defensive pressure in the first quarter (Reuters photo)

The Chiefs own the tie-breaker edge for the division title and home-field advantage to the Super Bowl. They finish the regular season against two clubs with losing records, San Diego and New Orleans.

"The first place thing is nice for today, but we have to take care of business the next two weeks," Chiefs quarterback Rich Gannon said.

Gannon scored twice to win his fourth game in a row since starter Elvis Grbac was sidelined by a broken collarbone. Kansas City took a 15-2 edge over Oakland in the 1990s, this the most lopsided win in that run.

Seven unclaimed playoff berths are at stake with each club having two games to play before the regular season ends December 22.

Denver, San Francisco and reigning Super Bowl champion Green Bay had already clinched playoff bids. Green Bay beat Tampa Bay 17-6 to seal the NFC Central crown and join San Francisco with a first-round playoff bye.

San Francisco advanced to the NFL's best record at

12-2 by beating Minnesota 28-17, handing the Vikings a setback in their playoff quest.

Two-time NFL Most Valuable Player Brett Favre threw for 280 yards, including a 43-yard touchdown pass to Robert Brooks in the first quarter and an eight-yarder to Dorsey Levens in the third for the Packers (11-3).

The Buccaneers were thwarted in their bid to seal their first playoff spot in 15 years but can do so by winning one of their final two games.

The New York Giants remained atop the NFC East by beating Philadelphia 31-21, turning three first-half turnovers into touchdowns and snapping a two-game winless skid.

"We hit a slump and we needed to win again," Giants coach Jim Fassel said. "There was a lot of pressure on us. Philadelphia played well but we had them matched."

The Giants can clinch a playoff berth by beating visiting Washington next Saturday. The Redskins beat Arizona 38-28 to remain one game behind New York in the division

race. Chicago (3-11) pushed Buffalo (6-8) to the edge of playoff elimination with a 20-3 triumph. It was the Bills' worst scoring output since 1994.

"I was disappointed tremendously. I would call it the low point of the season," Bills coach Marv Levy said.

Jermaine Lewis tied an NFL record with two punt returns touchdowns to spark Baltimore past Seattle 31-24. St. Louis beat New Orleans 34-27 and Atlanta downed San Diego 14-3.

In Sunday's late game, Olindo Mare kicked a 42-yard field goal as time expired to give Miami a 33-30 triumph over Detroit, keeping the Dolphins level with New England atop the AFC East.

Dan Marino threw for 310 yards and two touchdowns and drove Miami for the winning points after the Lions equalized with 79 seconds to play.

Detroit's Barry Sanders ran for 137 yards on 30 carries to become the first man in NFL history to rush for 100 yards in 12 consecutive games.

McEnroe beats Leconte in final of Honda Challenge

LONDON (AP) — John McEnroe, remaining unbeaten in his career against Henri Leconte, defeated the Frenchman on Sunday 6-2, 3-6 with a 10-5 tiebreaker — used in lieu of a third set in senior events — to win the ATP Senior Honda Challenge.

McEnroe, 38 and Leconte, 34, each won all three of their round-robin matches over three days to reach the final before a sellout in London's Royal Albert Hall.

En route to the final, McEnroe defeated five-time Wimbledon champion Bjorn Borg. The match Friday was their first in Britain in 16 years. He also beat Guillermo Vilas and John Lloyd.

McEnroe was 10 for 10 against Leconte during their ATP Tour career and now is 11 for 11 against the Frenchman.

McEnroe, acting like his old self, seemed to turn the match his way after losing the second set when he argued for several minutes with the referee over line calls. The delay in beginning the tiebreaker seemed to rattle Leconte as McEnroe went on to win 10-5.

The American said he has talked with Wimbledon referee Alan Mills about the idea of a senior event at Wimbledon, perhaps beginning in 1999.

Venables ponders Nigerian offer

LONDON (AFP) — Australian football authorities would be prepared to release coach Terry Venables if he is given the opportunity to coach Nigeria at next year's World Cup finals in France.

Venables is being targeted by Nigerian of a part-time basis — and Soccer Australia chief David Hill could allow Venables time off to take up the post.

Hill told Britain's Radio 5 Live: "I would want to discuss this first with Terry, but, of course, we're not in the World Cup and Nigeria is."

"It costs us a lot of money to have Terry as coach, by our standards a lot of money, when we're not in the World Cup. So, frankly, it may be possible for us to release him from his contractual obligations for a period if he wants to."

Striker Efan Ekoku said Venables would be welcomed by the Nigerian players, but doubts the deal will come off.

"I am sure we would benefit from having Terry Venables in charge," Ekoku said.

"But I think, with just six or seven months to the World Cup, we are more likely to get a coach who is familiar with the players and knows African football and is familiar with the workings of Nigeria and the Nigerian Football Association."

"To anybody who has not been involved with Nigeria, and to a lesser extent African football, it is a huge task."

Former England manager Venables' bid to lead Australia to France 98 failed when the Socceroos were beaten on the away-goals rule by Iran despite going through the qualifying stages unbeaten.

But the Australians still want Venables to coach their national team.

"Our bottom line is that we want him to play an on-going role for Australia," said Hill.

Russia delays naming swimming team

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russian Swimming Federation has delayed the announcement of the national team for the world championships in Perth, Australia, until later this month.

The Russian swimming authorities are waiting for the results of an international appeal by three Russian swimmers who were excluded from consideration for the championships after returning positive drug tests.

The swimmers, Vladimir Pyshenko, Olga Kochetkova and Natalia Mescherjakova, have appealed to the international panel, claiming they had taken banned substances unintentionally.

Andrei Zelenyayev, the swimmers' coach, said that one of his ex-students prepared cakes containing the banned anabolic steroids for which the swimmers tested positive.

SCOREBOARD

• National Basketball Association results

Detroit	93	Toronto	83
Philadelphia	93	New York	78
Milwaukee	97	Seattle	91
Indiana	99	Phoenix	97 (OT)
Denver	100	La Clippers	92
Sacramento	99	Golden State	84
Cleveland	94	La Lakers	84

• National Football League results

Baltimore	31	Seattle	24
Chicago	20	Buffalo	3
New England	26	Jacksonville	20
Kansas City	30	Oakland	0
St. Louis	34	New Orleans	27
NY Giants	31	Philadelphia	21
Pittsburgh	35	Denver	24
Green Bay	17	Tampa Bay	6
Washington	38	Arizona	28
Indianapolis	22	NY Jets	14
Atlanta	14	San Diego	3
San Francisco	28	Minnesota	17
Miami	33	Detroit	30

• Spanish football results

Celta Vigo	2	Real Valladolid	0
Merida	1	Racing Santander	2
Real Betis	3	Tenerife	0
Salamanca	4	Dep. La Coruna	1
Real Sociedad	1	Valencia	1
Compostela	1	Athletic Bilbao	4
Atletico Madrid	2	Sporting Gijon	1
Real Zaragoza	1	Barcelona	2
Real Oviedo	1	Real Madrid	1
Espanyol	1	Mallorca	0

• Portuguese League results

A. Coimbra	0	Benfense	0
Rio Ave	3	Vitoria Setubal	0
Farense	1	Estrela Amadora	1
Benfica	2	Salgueiros	2
Sp. g. Lisbon	2	Campomaiorense	0
V. Guimaraes	5	Varzim	0
Boavista	0	Maritimo Funchal	1
Chaves	2	Porto	2
Braga	3	Leca	1

• German league results

Wolfsburg	1	Hansa Rostock	1
Wer. Bremen	2	Karlsruhe	4
1860 Munich	1	Stuttgart	3
Arn. Bielefeld	0	VfL Bochum	2
B. Leverkusen	0	Schalke 04	0
Duisburg	2	Cologne	2
B. Moencheng	1	SV Hamburg	1
Kaiserslautern	2	Bayern Munich	0

• Romanian results

Rapid Bucharest	2	D. Bucharest	0
F. Falticeni	2	FC Chindia	0
FC National	2	S. Studentesc	1
CSM Resita	2	Farul Constanta	1
FCM Bacau	2	Petrolul Ploiesti	0
Jiul Petrosani	0	Universitatea Cluj	4
Otelul Galati	3	Gloria Bistrita	0
Univ. Craiova	1	FC Arges	2

• Greek results

AEK	2	Ethnikos	1
Pyrgos	1	Olympiakos	1
Panathinaikos	4	Kavala	1
PAOK	1	Apollon	0
Ionikos	1	Heraklis	0
OFI	3	Veria	0
Kalamata	2	Athinaikos	0
Panionios	4	Proodeftiki	0

• French championship result

Bastia	0	Toulouse	0
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• English Premiership result

Wimbledon	1	Southampton	0
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• Belgium results

Alost	1	FC Brugge	4
Standard Liege	0	Lierse	0
Charleroi	2	Antwerp	1
Lokeren	1	Beveren	2
Anderlecht	1	Westerlo	0
Lommel	1	Saint-Truiden	1
Gent	1	Genk	2
Ekeren	0	Harelbeke	2

• Dutch League results

FC Utrecht	5	Vitesse Arnhem	3
FC Groningen	2	Maastricht	3
Nijmegen	3	Feyenoord	2
Fortuna Sittard	1	Twente Enschede	0
Ajax	1	Roda JC Kerkrade	0
NAC Breda	1	Sparta Rotterdam	2
Heerenveen	0	Doetinchem	0

• Italian results

Brescia	3	Empoli	1
Lecce	0	Vicenza	1
Ac Milan	2	Bari	0
Piacenza	1	Napoli	0
As Roma	3	Atalanta	0
Udinese	4	Bologna	3
Fiorentina	1	AC Parma	1
Juventus	2	Lazio of Rome	1
Sampdoria	1	Inter Milan	1

Huber defeats Hingis in hard-fought 5 set match at Masters of Champions tournament

FRANKFURT (AP) — Anke Huber of Germany battled five sets for an upset of top favourite and World No. 1 Martina Hingis in the final of the first Masters of Champions tennis tournament Sunday.

The match, Huber's only tournament win this season, started off as expected with the 17-year-old Hingis rushing off to a 6-2 first set win.

Huber pulled even taking the second set 6-3, with Hingis bouncing back with a 6-2 third set, and Huber winning the fourth with the identical result as Hingis appeared to be tiring.

Then the battle started. Hingis held her serve in the first game of the fifth set, then broke Huber's serve in the second game at zero, with the help of one of many net rollers in the match, and a double-fault by Huber.

But the 23-year-old Huber, who has dropped from No. 6 in world rankings to 14 this season, got a rebreak against Hingis in the 3rd game then held her



Anke Huber

own serve to tie the last set at 2-2.

Both women held their services to go to 5-5, with the volleys getting longer and the crowd loudly applauding as the two chased down shots that seemed impossible to return.

But the young Swiss started tired and in the 11th game and with the help of yet another net roller, Huber broke Hingis' service to pull ahead 6-5.

Hingis fought to come back in the last game going ahead 30-0, but Huber recovered to win the set 7-5, the match, a purse of \$381,000 and her only tournament of the year.

Hingis, who ends the 1997 season with 79 match wins against only six losses, got \$324,858 as the runner-up. No world ranking points were awarded for this \$1.6 million tournament.

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	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	
				SLEEP WALKERS Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only			

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Sainz wins Race of Champions

GRAN CANARIA, Canary Islands (AFP) — Spain's Carlos Sainz finally won the Race of Champions here on Sunday after failing in seven previous attempts. Former world rally champion Sainz beat Scotland's Colin McRae in the final having earlier exited Frenchman Didier Auriol in the semi-final of this unusual knockout event. "At last," said Sainz afterwards and McRae, for his part, said: "As far as driving style is concerned, you must be as tidy as possible. You can't afford to make any mistake. But today, Carlos was unstoppable."

Sabotage could have wrecked draw

MARSEILLE (AFP) — A timeswitch designed to cut out the electric transformers at Marseille's Stade Velodrome could have sabotaged last Thursday's World Cup draw, police sources said Sunday. In the event, the device did cut the emergency electricity supply at the venue but not the main network, luckily for tournament organisers. The switch was later found by technicians tipped off by angry nearby residents, who suddenly lost their own supply.

Chagaev to be stripped of title

SCHWERIN (AFP) — The International Amateur Boxing Federation said Sunday it saw no option other than to strip Ruslan Chagaev of his world title after it emerged he had

participated in two professional bouts. The Uzbek won the title last month beating Cuba's Felix Savon in Budapest. But double Olympic champion Savon is now expected to win the crown instead for what would be the sixth time. Federation rules forbid boxers competing in professional bouts. "I have no choice other than to disqualify him," federation general secretary Karl Heinz Wehr said. The organisation's judicial commission is to rule on the affair in January. Chagaev's win at last month's championships had provoked consternation with most observers judging that Savon clearly deserved the title. The unheralded Uzbek, who had previously won tournaments in Italy, the Czech Republic and Thailand, beat Savon 14-4 on points and the result left one of Savon's aides threatening the referee and the judges.

Nagano gets arbitration panel

LAUSANNE (AFP) — A panel of the Court of Arbitration for Sport will sit at next February's Nagano Winter Olympics to make a final ruling on any dispute. The panel sat for the first time at last year's Atlanta Olympics where the legal and scientific experts cleared two Russian bronze medalists who had been disqualified for taking bromantan. The International Olympic Committee had described the drug as a cocktail of stimulants, steroids and masking agents. But the panel gave the Russians the benefit of the doubt. Andrei Korneyev kept his men's 200m breaststroke swimming bronze medal and Zakhar Guleyev his 48kg Greco-Roman wrestling bronze.

Roma keep the heat on Italian leaders

PARIS (AFP) — AS Roma swept to a convincing 3-0 victory over Atalanta on Sunday to stay third in the Serie A and keep the heat on Italian league leaders Inter Milan and Juventus.

The win at the Olympic stadium left Roma on 22 points, just three behind Juventus, who beat Lazio 2-1 on Saturday, and five behind Inter, who had to settle for a 1-1 draw with Sampdoria.

Parma, last season's runners-up, lost touch with the leaders after being held to a 1-1 draw away to Fiorentina in Sunday evening's game. Roma's three goals during a 10-minute spell midway through the first-half gave Zdenek Zeman's Brazilian-powered side an invincible lead.

World Cup winner Cafu sent in a dangerous cross after 22 minutes and the interception by Atalanta defender Massimo Carrara ended up in his own net. Francesco Totti cracked home the second and Cafu's compatriot Paulo Sergio added a superb third as Roma ripped the Atalanta defence to shreds.

Udinese joined Roma on 22 points after a thrilling 4-3 win over 10-man Bologna. Udinese took an early lead when a free-kick from Belgian midfielder Johan Walem found Oliver Bierhoff, and the German international's header proved just too good for the Bologna keeper.

Bologna's Swedish giant Kennet Andersson nodded an equaliser after a corner taken by Roberto Baggio. Before Brazilian striker Amoroso put Udinese back in front in the 35th minute.

Carlo Nervo soon brought Bologna level again, only for teammate Michele Paramatti to get himself sent off six minutes after the re-start. It was the turning point in the match and there was no surprise when Udinese's Paolo Poggiuso to head home for 3-2 in the 67th minute.

Bierhoff looked to have completed the rout in the closing minutes, nodding in the rebound after Poggi hit the crossbar, but a late strike from Bologna's Russian striker Igor Kolyvanov made the scoreline more respectable.

Barcelona went back to the top of the Spanish league on Saturday after first half goals from Sergi and Rivaldo brought a 2-1 win at Real Zaragoza, while previous leaders Real Madrid were held 1-1 at Real Oviedo.

Barcelona's win gives them a two-point lead over their rivals with the Catalan club having garnered 34 points from 15 games.

Stoke sensation Raul was on target for Real two minutes after the break but an equaliser from Uruguayan forward Juanqui Gonzalez in the 40th minute meant the champions had to settle for a point and second spot for now. It was scant consolation for Real fans to recall that Barcelona went down 2-

1 at Oviedo recently. And a row blew up on Sunday between Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz and coach Jupp Heynckes over the match.

Atletico Madrid made it a better night for the capital with a 2-1 win over Sporting Gijon cementing their third place, five points off the pace.

Strasbourg warmed up for their UEFA Cup Italian adventure in the worst possible way on Friday, losing at home to Guingamp, but there was no change at the top as the leading sides all won.

Metz, second behind reigning champions Monaco at start of play, kept up their good form by beating struggling Chateauroux with first half goals from Bruno Rodriguez and ever-dependable Robert Pires.

But Monaco stay top after a tough 2-1 triumph over Lyon achieved with a late, late winner from starlet David Trezeguet after his side had been one down at the break.

Paris Saint Germain remain third after Brazilian

skipper Rai scored the only goal two minutes from the end at rock-bottom Cannes, while Lens leapfrogged Marseille into fourth with a 1-0 win at Le Havre on Friday. However Marseille jumped back over Lens into fourth spot on goal difference following their 0-0 with Montpellier on Sunday.

Trezeguet came to the rescue with his tenth goal of the season in the 84th minute to give the Monegasques their sixth straight win after Martin Djetou had started the fightback with an equaliser on 69 minutes.

The gangling Frederic Kanoute had given Lyon the lead in the 21st minute following a precision pass from fellow Cameroon star Joseph-Desire Job. Djetou's left-footed strike from substitute Camot's corner came as Monaco were beginning to show signs of frustration after failing to find their normal fluency in attack.

But African footballer of the year Viktor Ikpeba finally rescued them by setting up Trezeguet's winner. Ten-man Stuttgart moved

to within three points of second-placed Bayern Munich on Saturday beating Bayern's city rivals 1860 3-1 while Bayer Leverkusen and Schalke settled for a tame 0-0 draw in the other main match of the day.

But the title race looks well on the way to being resolved already following Kaiserslautern's 2-0 win over Bayern on Friday night, which gives the leaders a seven-point buffer.

Kaiserslautern have 42 points from their 18 games, followed by Bayern on 35, Stuttgart 32 and Leverkusen level with Schalke on 30.

A Tijjani Babangida goal in the 10th minute on Saturday gave Dutch league leaders Ajax Amsterdam a 1-0 home victory over Roda JC Kerkrade, their 17th win in 18 games and a 15 point lead over PSV Eindhoven who lost 4-1 at Willem II Tilburg.

2nd Arab Handball Champions Cup

Al Rayyan take Group B lead as Jordan's Al Arabi lose again

Kingdom's Al Salt face UAE's Ahli today

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Qatar's Al Rayyan beat all expectations and jumped from third to first place in Group B with 5 points Monday after a 24-22 (15-13) win over fourth placed Kuwait's Al Qadissieh on the sixth day of the 2nd Arab Handball Champions Cup currently under way in Amman with ten teams taking part.

Qatar's Al Rayyan will have a chance to maintain their lead and move to the semifinals when they face second placed Egypt's Al Olympi Tuesday — the last day of the first round.

Also Monday, Jordan's Al Arabi lost the chance to score a sole win after a 42-31 loss to Egypt's Al Olympi and stayed at the bottom of the standings with one point from a 35-35 tie with Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli.

Al Arabi will now play for ninth and tenth places. In Group A, Egypt's Al Ahli still lead with 8 points followed by UAE's Al Ahli with 4 points.

Jordan's Al Salt will have a tough test meeting UAE's Al Ahli in the fight for the second qualifying berth in the group.

Al Salt are now third place with 2 points after scoring Jordan's only vic-

Tuesday's schedule of matches

UAE's Al Ahli vs. Jordan's Al Salt	3 p.m.
S. Arabia's Al Ahli vs. Kuwait's Qadissieh	5 p.m.
Egypt's Al Olympi vs. Qatar's Al Rayyan	7 p.m.

Group A

	P	W	T	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
Egypt's Al Ahli	4	4	-	-	140	91	8
UAE's Al Ahli	3	2	-	1	91	80	4
Jordan's Al Salt	3	1	-	2	71	76	2
Leb.'s Sadaqah	3	1	-	2	79	106	2
Qatar's Qatar	3	-	-	3	59	87	-

Group B

	P	W	T	L	Gf	Ga	Pts
Qatar's Rayyan	3	2	1	-	87	74	5
Egypt's Olympi	3	2	-	1	104	82	4
S. Arabia's Ahli	3	1	2	-	90	87	4
K's Qadissieh	3	1	-	2	77	91	2
Jordan's Arabi	4	-	1	3	123	147	1

tory in the tourney by beating Qatar's Qatar Club 26-18.

They will have to beat the UAE team by a big margin to move to the semis otherwise they will play for 5-8th places.

Qatar's Al Rayyan 24 Kuwait's Al Qadissieh 22: The two teams played a slow match as Al Qadissieh were able to stand tall against Al Rayyan's accurate hits who ended the first half 15-13.

In the second half Al Rayyan tried to expand the difference but Al Qadissieh kept a close trail and eventually lost the match 24-22.

Egypt's Al Olympi 42 Jordan's Al Arabi 31: Egypt's Al Olympi had an easy match against lowly Al Arabi who

fought bravely for one last chance for a win.

Al Olympi, armed with experience, gave Al Arabi a hard time. The Jordanian team tried to penetrate through Al Olympi's tight defence and it worked for some time.

Al Olympi were able to win and adding two points to move to second place with 4 points. Qatar's Qatar met Lebanon's Al Sadaqah in Monday's late match.

In Sunday's late match, Jordan's Al Salt lost a good chance to improve their standing and boost their qualifying chances when they lost 28-27 (14-13) to Lebanon's Al Sadaqah.

Held under the patronage of HRH Princess Sumayya, the 2nd Arab Handball Champions Cup kicked off Dec. 3 and concludes Dec. 13.

The Jordan Handball Federation has allocated cash rewards for Jordan's two teams in the tourney — Al Salt and Al Arabi: JD 2,000 if they finish third, JD1,000 for fourth place and JD500 for fifth place.

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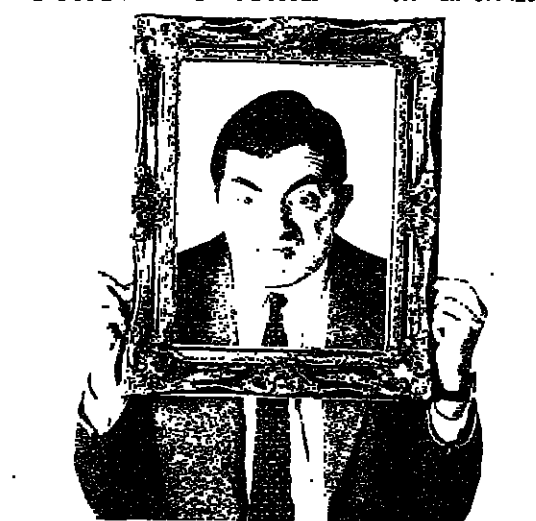
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- c. The latest date for submission of inquiries pertinent to the tender is 5/1/1998.
- d. Bids shall be deposited in the BID BOX at the Furniture & Equipment Division/MOE, or by mail, not later than 11:00 a.m. (local time) on 4th Feb., 1998.
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U.S. will not dictate Israeli W. Bank troop withdrawal

PARIS (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright piled pressure on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to make key decisions on peace but said on Monday Washington would not dictate terms for Israel's troop withdrawal from the West Bank.

She told reporters after meeting French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin at the end of a four-day visit to France: "We are not asking the Israelis for a percentage now."

But Ms. Albright, who met both Israeli and Palestinian leaders in the past three days, said that both sides "must do

a lot" to revive the Middle East peace process.

Ms. Albright is demanding from Israel a "credible" new troop pullback in the West Bank and a freeze on Jewish settlements. From the Palestinians she wants a firmer commitment to protect Israel from attacks by Islamists.

"I think that both sides must do a lot," Ms. Albright said in halting French.

"One hundred per cent effort on security matters is absolutely necessary for the situation to improve in the region," she added.

Ms. Albright, who later set

off for a seven-nation African tour, met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Paris on Friday and again on Saturday, hours after meeting Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Geneva.

Mr. Netanyahu said his government had approved the principle of a pullback but would need several more weeks to work out the details.

He had previously said that even then it would require five months of security cooperation from the Palestinians to put it in place.

Israeli media reports said

Mr. Netanyahu may offer the Palestinians a further six to eight per cent of the West Bank, while the Palestinians have demanded up to 30 per cent. U.S. officials have suggested they hope to split the difference.

Ms. Albright's aides said she was bent on concrete results in the peace process, which has been stalled for the past nine months, before the end of the year.

She is expected to meet Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat again after a NATO meeting in Brussels on Dec. 16-17.

Barak in trouble trying to establish himself as best answer to Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Six months after taking over Israel's Labour Party, ex-army chief Ehud Barak is still struggling to impose himself as the opposition's best answer to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

A Labour convention on Sunday highlighted growing disenchantment within party ranks with Mr. Barak's performance since he took over Israel's biggest political grouping from former prime minister Shimon Peres.

Critics accuse Mr. Barak of using strong-arm tactics to sideline rivals inside the left while failing to show the kind of charisma which could attract centrist voters away from Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Barak's weakness was made apparent by his inability to garner a majority of Labour delegates to back a proposal to appoint a professional administrator for the party — a move many suspected was designed to strengthen his own control.

Adding insult to injury, Mr. Peres was met by a lengthy ovation when he addressed Sunday's meeting, while Mr. Barak's speech was answered with a smattering of polite applause.

The incident had many wondering if Mr. Barak is really the man to challenge Mr. Netanyahu, whose popularity has been sinking steadily thanks to a series of government and diplomatic crises.

"The malaise is obvious. The party is afraid that it is

headed for a disaster in the next general elections scheduled for 2000 if Barak doesn't change direction," said Shlomo Ben Ami, a Labour deputy who also ran for the Labour leadership six months ago.

Mr. Ben Ami asserted in an interview that Mr. Barak was taking too soft a line in challenging Mr. Netanyahu's policies — notably his headline stance in negotiations with the Palestinians — and had failed to put his own ideas up for debate within the party, forcing him on several occasions to back down on announced initiatives.

Another Labour heavy, deputy Uzi Baram, agreed that Mr. Barak barely rated a "passing grade" for his performance to date as head of the party he had pledged to turn into a "war machine" to topple the right.

Mr. Barak, 55, brushed aside such criticism and the setback he suffered at Sunday's party congress, saying on Israel Radio that the vote "concerned an obscure procedural matter."

He added that the vote against him proved the democratic climate inside Labour and contrasted with recent upheaval in Mr. Netanyahu's Likud bloc, where the prime minister's autocratic methods sparked a mutiny by senior party leaders.

Concerning the crisis with the Palestinians, Mr. Barak insists he still embodies the pro-peace policies of Mr. Peres and the slain former

premier Yitzhak Rabin.

But he said that to defeat Mr. Netanyahu Labour has to avoid frightening centrist voters who backed the right-wing leader 19 months ago believing he could make good on a promise of "peace with security" and are now unhappy they have neither.

The same stance however has those on the political left wondering if Mr. Barak, the much-decorated career soldier, would really follow a more liberal diplomatic path than Mr. Netanyahu concerning the Palestinians.

In recent months, Mr. Barak has succeeded in holding a steady advance of several points over Mr. Netanyahu in most opinion polls. At Sunday's party meeting he vowed to put that popularity to a successful test soon, predicting that the current government will fall early next year.

Pollsters counter that Mr. Peres was also far ahead of Mr. Netanyahu in the polls and still lost the 1996 elections as undecided voters swung to the right.

Backers of Mr. Barak argue that six months is not enough time to judge a man who entered politics barely two years ago.

"He hasn't even finished his schooling, it would be suicide for Labour to change horses now," said Jean Friedman, a Tel Aviv businessman and one of the Labour party's main fund-raisers.

"We still have to give Barak a chance," he said.

Peres calls for Palestinian state, Golan pullout

TEL AVIV (R) — Former Prime Minister Shimon Peres has urged Israel to accept a Palestinian state and to give up the Golan Heights if it wants peace with Syrian President Hafez Assad.

Speaking to his Labour Party late on Sunday, Mr. Peres said: "A state or no state? It must be heard in a clear voice — a state, because we cannot take on our shoulders the economic and social responsibility of three million Arabs."

"Secondly is the matter of borders — it must be decided: The truth is Assad wants peace. He won't make peace if anyone believes it's possible to do it on part of the Golan Heights," Mr. Peres said in the remarks broadcast by Army Radio Monday.

Israeli political reporters said the remarks were the Nobel Peace Laureate's most unequivocal public comments to date on the two "land-for-peace" issues at the heart of peacemaking with the Palestinians and Syria.

"In such a blunt way — this is the first time," Yedioth Ahronot correspondent Shimon Shiffer told Reuters.

The Jerusalem Post newspaper wrote that Mr. Peres, 74, stole the show at the Labour Party convention from Ehud Barak, the 55-year-old former army chief who took over the leadership from Mr. Peres in June.

Israel's rightist Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu, 48, defeated Mr. Peres in elections in May 1996, resisting the land-for-peace policies of the more dovish Labour and vowing to take a tougher stance in negotiations with the Arabs.

Likud rejects establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip lands occupied by Israel in 1967. Labour's official platform neither embraces the concept of a state nor rejects it.

"I don't know why the Netanyahu government wants to waste time. It has wasted a year and a half. In this year and a half Israel's situation has deteriorated — the country has been weakened, the economy has been weakened. What did we profit?" Mr. Peres told Israel Radio in an interview Monday.

Syria demands Israel cede all of the Golan Heights occupied in the 1967 war in any peace deal. Labour Party governments had in the past offered to withdraw to a depth equivalent to the depth of peace without committing publicly to a full withdrawal.

"So long as the agreement is put off, the price of the agreement will not drop but the cost of the delay will go up in human lives, in loss of prestige, in loss of power, in loss of friends — for what?" Mr. Peres told the radio.



IN MEMORY OF THE INTIFADA: A Palestinian woman makes a victory sign while holding pictures of her son during a protest at the Red Cross on the 10th anniversary of the Palestinian 'Intifada' in the Gaza Strip calling Israel to free their sons held as political prisoners in Israeli jails. Palestinians started their 'Intifada' in 1987 after an Israeli truck driver killed four Palestinians (Reuters photo)

Israelis killed almost 1,500 Palestinians since launch of intifada — human rights report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli human rights group said Monday that 1,479 Palestinians had been killed by Israelis in the 10 years since the outbreak of the intifada.

All but 133 were killed by the army, the B'Tselem group said in a report.

Between 1988 and 1989 — considered the peak of the intifada uprising against Israeli rule from 1987 to 1994 — 556 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces, B'Tselem said.

But when Israel started to transfer territory in the Gaza Strip and West Bank to the Palestinians in 1994 as part of peace accords, the number of Palestinian casualties "dropped markedly," it said.

"Eighteen Palestinians were killed by the Israeli army in the past year," the report said. Since the start of the intifada against Israeli occupation of Palestinian areas on Dec. 9, 1987, a total of 256 Israeli civilians and 127 Israeli sol-

diers have been killed by Palestinians, the report said.

In 1988 and 1989, 43 Israeli soldiers and civilians were killed by Palestinians but the number jumped to 104 in the two years after the intifada ended.

The increase in Israeli casualties came with a rise in terror attacks by Islamist groups in opposition to the 1993 Oslo peace accords.

"In the past four years, the number of Israeli civilians killed by Palestinians has been 118 as compared to 37 in the four years before that," B'Tselem said.

Most soldiers who killed Palestinians were not punished by the army, it said.

"In most of the instances in which Palestinians were killed by Israeli army fire, Israeli soldiers' lives were not in danger although the army spokesman has not admitted this," the report wrote.

"Despite this, up to now, soldiers have been brought before the law in only 55

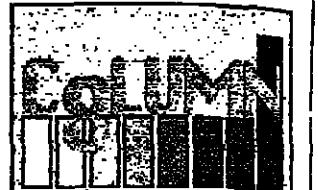
cases and only 19 were convicted," B'Tselem added.

An army spokesman said he could not comment immediately on the report.

Another Israeli group, HaMoked, that offers legal aid to Palestinians in cases against the army, raised the same accusations.

"In total, of the 441 complaints of human rights abuses of Palestinians received by HaMoked, only in 22 cases were the soldiers put on trial," the centre wrote in a report to mark international human rights day on Dec. 10.

To punish Palestinians during and after the intifada, the army has issued some 18,000 administrative detention orders to Palestinians and expelled another 481 from the Gaza Strip and West Bank, according to B'Tselem. The army has also destroyed 1,800 Palestinian homes it says were built without the proper permits and another 447 as punishment for crimes, B'Tselem said.



'Hope Concert' in honour of Princess Diana

LONDON (AFP) — Ninety-nine days after the death of Princess Diana, a bevy of pop stars gathered in London on Sunday to raise money in her memory. More than 6,000 people were set to attend the Hope Concert, which is to raise funds for charities which the Princess of Wales patronised. It was taking place amid press criticism that lawyers for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund want to copyright her name and image. "If the Virgin Mary has had to cope with what the pop star Madonna has done with that name... Diana can cope without 'licensing'," wrote columnist Alasdair Palmer in the Sunday Telegraph.

No more drink-flying on British Airways

LONDON (AFP) — British Airways (BA) planes are off-limits to drunks, the company announced Sunday, stating that it will refuse to let inebriated passengers on board and will limit alcohol consumption during flights. Like "most other air carriers we are experiencing an increase in the frequency and severity of disruptive and drunken behaviour," a BA statement read. To decrease the number of violent incidents involving intoxicated passengers, BA crews will also be allowed to confiscate alcohol bought in duty-free shops, the airline said.

Special camera induces heart attacks

BATUMI (R) — The controversial chief of the autonomous Adjara region in Georgia said assassins recently tried to kill him with a special camera that he was convinced emitted deadly rays. Aslan Abashidze accused "enemies within Georgia and abroad" of being behind what he called "a terrorist act". He said he had met two people last summer who asked to photograph him. "I noticed the unusual brightness of the flashbulb," Abashidze said, adding that he experienced chest pains within a half hour afterwards. He was later diagnosed as having suffered a heart attack. "The camera gave off electromagnetic rays which led to my heart attack. Without the quick intervention of the doctors, I would have died," he said.

'Worst employer in Britain' contest launched

LONDON (R) — Bosses who are bigots, bullies or misers can expect the wrong kind of publicity if employees enter them in a contest this week to find the "worst employer in Britain." The Trades Union Congress (TUC) launched the telephone hot-line to encourage workers to call in and expose bad bosses. "We are asking employees to help us expose the worst of the worst because until the bosses are challenged, they will continue to get away with it," the TUC, which lobbies for workers' rights, said.

Three tigresses sow terror in Spanish town

BURJASOT (AFP) — Three Bengali tigresses escaped from a circus in this Spanish town sowing terror among the local population before being recaptured by their trainer. The three felines apparently managed to make a break while being taken back to their cages after a performance. Two of them were captured by their trainers minutes after escaping but the third enjoyed a few hours of freedom as dozens of police officers and sharpshooters patrolled the town streets which were evacuated. Police said no injuries or damage were caused by the three big cats.

Tension rises on Yemen-Saudi border as negotiations falter

SANAA (AFP) — Armed incidents have been on the rise between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, diplomats said Monday, as Sanaa ruled out new concessions to its powerful neighbour in negotiations to demarcate their border.

The diplomats, asking not to be named, said the situation was tense on the border where three clashes had taken place since mid-November.

Yemeni and Saudi authorities have reported a single incident on Nov. 17, over a Saudi flag flying over a school in a disputed village where at least two people were shot dead.

Two other incidents have followed, leaving an unspecified number of wounded, in the northwestern sector of the border and along the central sector in the Rub Al Khali (empty quarter) desert.

Sanaa, meanwhile, has said a visit to Riyadh last week by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani failed to secure a breakthrough in

negotiations to demarcate the border that have been going on for two years.

Yemen has made all the concessions it can, General Abdullah Hussein Al Bashiri, head of the presidential office, said late Sunday at the end of a return visit by a Saudi delegation.

"It is now in the hands of the Saudis," he said, echoing a statement from Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz that "the ball is now in the court" of Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The two sides are "close" to an accord, Prince Nayef insisted on Saturday.

But a Yemeni official who took part in the talks with the visiting Saudi delegation led by a minister without portfolio, Mousaed Ibn Mohammad Al Aayban, said the outlook was bleak.

"The Saudi side is making an intransigent stand and they did not bring anything new to help reach an accord," the official said.

Other sources close to the negotiations said the kingdom was refusing to return territory which belonged to the former South Yemen and was occupied and annexed by Saudi forces during clashes in 1969.

Saudi authorities in the 1970s nibbled away at more chunks of territory in the Rub Al Khali, which is believed to be rich in oil deposits, according to the Yemeni side.

The sources said that Yemen's mighty neighbour is also demanding a corridor to grant it access to the Arabian Sea, a demand which is totally unacceptable for Sanaa.

"Yemen made an important concession over its historic rights... by giving up the three provinces: Assir, Najran and Jizan," a Yemeni politician said, referring to a 1995 accord.

"It offered this concession hoping that Saudi Arabia would return territories in the eastern sector. But the recent negotiations show that Riyadh wants to impose a fait accompli," he said, also asking not to be identified.

After clashes in December 1994 and January 1995, the two countries agreed to normalise relations and work to demarcate the border, while Sanaa dropped longstanding claims to the three provinces.

The confessions of a Syrian on trial for bombing in the port city of Aden have added to the latest tension. The suspect said last week he was recruited by Saudi intelligence to assassinate Iryani, a charge denied by Riyadh.

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